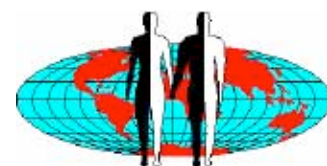


# IMAGINE

VOL. 1 NO. 1

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OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF  
THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA

## Hey, worker!

It's the heat of sweltering summer in the Motor City capital of Canada—Windsor, Ontario. People like you and me go to work, sweat out our jobs—in factory, office, home—those “lucky” enough to have work. Some—a goodly number—fret out their time in quiet desperation wondering how they are going to make ends meet on what little unemployment dole cheque they get.

We work when we can, some five days a week, others accepting overtime to pay bills and the mortgage. We try to build up a fund to live comfortably enough to keep paying bills and accumulating goods in the belief that we are living the good life. We try to plan a future, get married, and raise kids, in a world where everything has become a commodity for sale—with the forced message from television, radio and newspaper to *buy, buy, buy* because that is how we will supposedly find happiness. Meanwhile, we keep a watch over our shoulders in the hope that the latest round of economic “restructuring” and “rationalization” and “globalization” won’t throw us on the economic rubbish heap.

This is the best of all worlds, we are told, even though the corporate powers that be know that all is not well; that recession is constantly nipping at their heels. They tell us, “There is no alternative.”

We are the workers. We’re the ones who build things, make things, provide services, make things work, provide the ideas. But though we build the world around us, it does not belong to

us. We produce not for ourselves, but at the behests and whims of others.

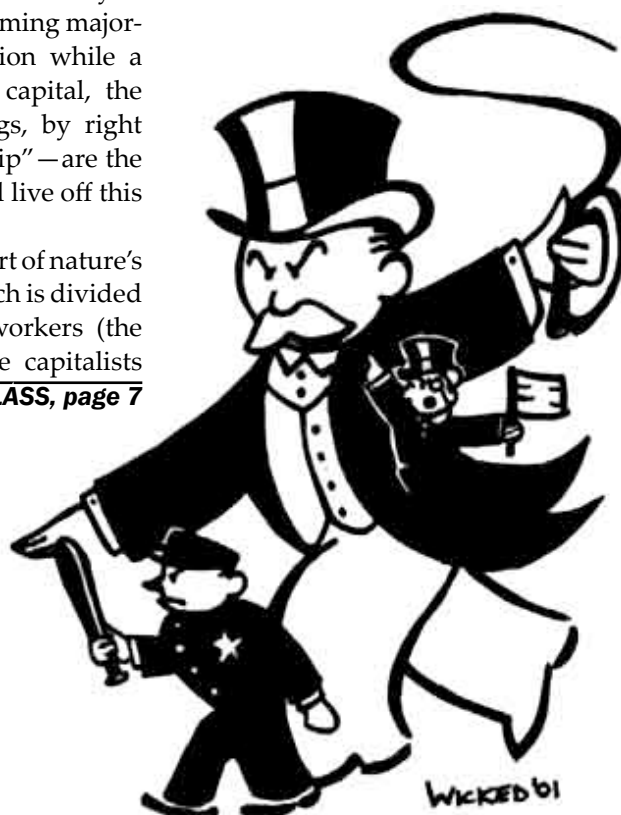
We are the ones who are told what to produce, how to produce it, how much, and how fast.

We are the ones who receive a paycheque, be it high or low, not for selling what we produce but for selling our power to work. With that paycheque we try to buy back what we make. The source of someone else’s profits comes from our work.

How did it come to this? How did we end up with a worldwide society in which there is an overwhelming majority forced into this situation while a few—the ones who own capital, the means of producing things, by right of a thing called “ownership”—are the ones who “employ” us and live off this thing called “profit”?

It’s certainly not any part of nature’s order to have a society which is divided between those who are workers (the many) and those who are capitalists

see **WORKING CLASS**, page 7



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# Socialism Q&A

## Is capitalism really broken, and is there anything we can do to fix it?

**G**reetings to all readers and welcome to the first edition of the *Northern Socialist*. This journal is published by the Socialist Party of Canada (SPC), a companion party in the World Socialist Movement (WSM). Our purpose is to promote the establishment of a socialist society to replace the current capitalist system.

### What is the difference between capitalism and socialism?

*Capitalism* is a world economic and social system where the means of production (land, factories, etc.) and the distribution of wealth is owned and controlled by the capitalist class. The basic unit in this system, the commodity, must be sold for a profit to pay rent, costs, and produce the necessary capital to be reinvested to accumulate more capital. Workers are forced to sell their labour power to the capitalists, who then extract the surplus value

(i.e. value the workers put into a commodity over and above the wages they receive). Thus two classes are formed, the capitalists who own but do not produce, and the workers who produce but do not own. *Socialism* is also a world economic and social system, but one where the means of production and the distribution of wealth is based on common ownership and democratic control, and is operated in the interests of society as a whole. Socialism will be a world without states, classes, or money; where production will be to meet human needs, and everyone will have *free access* to all the goods provided by society according to their self-determined needs.

### Why should we change a system that works?

For the vast majority of people in the world, capitalism does not work. Wars, disease, starvation, and poverty continue unabated year after year. Basic human needs are not being met because capitalism by its very nature must choose profit over people. Without profit, capital cannot be accumulated and the system would fail. Thus, human needs can be met only if you are able to pay for them. That's why some 15 million people die of starvation and malnutrition related diseases every year, even though we are quite capable of producing enough to feed everyone. We even destroy food and pay farmers *not* to produce food to keep prices and profit high. Capitalism is also why many millions more die of easily treated diseases when we have an abundance of the necessary medicines. Starving and sick people who are unable to pay for food or drugs simply don't receive them. You may look upon this as evil. We see it as the normal functioning of the capitalist system and the reason we want to replace it.

### But hasn't socialism been tried and failed?

The word *socialism* is probably the most misrepresented in the English language. The Toronto Star recently ran a series of articles on the fall of Communism on the tenth anniversary of the end of the Soviet Union. Doesn't the USSR prove socialism/communism's failure? The capitalist media would like you to think so. Many groups, parties and countries have called themselves socialist. That does not make them so. If you look back to our description of socialism, you will clearly see that we have never had a world economic system without states, without money, without classes, where production was owned by and for the whole of the population: not in the Soviet Union, China, nor in Cuba. Our party stated in 1918 that the Bolshevik revolution was not socialist but rather state capitalist. Certainly, the socialist society that we promote has never been advocated by the world's Social Democratic parties. Just ask the NDP! They simply want to get elected to manage capitalism for the capitalists, just like all the other parties. Despite what the capitalist media would like you to believe, *socialism has never been tried*.

### Can't we simply work to improve the system we already have?

There are hundreds of organizations, such as the Council of Canadians, Greenpeace, and various anti-poverty groups, full of well-meaning people who want to change capitalism for the better; to make it a responsible system that works for the benefit of all. They have not understood the true meaning of capitalism: that everything must be sacrificed to accumulate capital—workers' rights, human rights, the environment, your grandmother's medical treatment, and anything else that impinges on profit. For the last 200 years

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The Socialist Party of Canada provides educational material and forums to explain capitalism and socialism, and works to promote working class understanding of socialism. Although primarily active in Canada, the Party sends information to people around the world.

The Socialist Party of Canada was founded in 1905. It is a companion party in an international organization of socialist parties known as the World Socialist Movement, whose Object and Declaration of Principles can be found elsewhere in this issue.

or so that capitalism has been the dominant economic mode, we have fought innumerable battles for better working conditions, more pay, improved social programs. We have won some of them, only to see our hard work legislated away when it became politically expedient to so. Today in Ontario we have seen the Harris government roll back labour legislation fifty years with a few strokes of the pen, including instituting a 60-hour work week! Despite our best efforts, we still have the capitalist system and we still have its unacceptable exploitation and abuses that we had at the beginning. We call the endless drive to make capitalism better *reformism*. We would spend our time, energies, and resources educating people to establish socialism rather than waste time in the false belief that our present system can be made to work in everyone's interest.

### **But isn't reformism working? Aren't we better off than we used to be?**

Many people around the world are worse off than in former times. Many countries who have fallen under the guidance of the World Bank, World Trade Organization, and International Monetary Fund have been forced to give up local economies that could at least provide the bare minimum. They are coerced to restructure in the interests of the capitalist class, using valuable land to produce cash crops for export. The proceeds are used to pay off huge debts that never go down. The results have been disastrous, invariably bringing greater poverty and gutted social services. Some of us in the so-called developed world have better living standards than our parents and grand parents. By most projections, we may be the last generation to be able to say that. Recent studies point to an exponential growth in the gap between the capitalist and worker classes. In other words, we're getting a smaller and smaller share of all the wealth we produce.

### **How does the SPC differ from other socialist parties?**

There are many groups/parties out there who use the name "socialist". Many of them believe capitalism can be changed incrementally into socialism. They are generally referred to as "Left-wing". We believe the Left wing and the Right wing are both parts of the same bird: capitalism. Other groups want to suddenly replace capitalism by a military or violent coup led by a small group who will later convince the rest of the population that they need socialism. We promote a peaceful revolution, taking control of the existing political system democratically only when the vast majority of the people understand socialism and make a conscious choice for it. We are the only party working for our own demise, as there will be no need for political parties when we achieve our objective. The WSM does not have leaders, as leaders imply followers who are told what to do. Rather, we expect everyone to be able to promote their ideas in a democratic forum. We base our arguments, objects, and principles on a scientific understanding of society, and we have maintained the same principles since 1904.

These themes and others will be more fully explained and developed in this and subsequent issues of the *Northern Socialist*. We expect to be publishing quarterly; we encourage you to subscribe to make sure you get the alternative views you won't read in the managed news and opinion of the mainstream media. We welcome your letters, opinions, criticisms and comments. If you wish to join the Socialist Party of Canada, or get more information, our contact information appears on page 2.

—J. AYERS

**Subscribe to  
the *Northern Socialist* today —  
only \$12/year (4 issues)!**  
**Make out your cheque to the  
Socialist Party of Canada and  
send it to our regular address.**

## **The Socialist Party of Canada**

### **Object**

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of society as a whole.

### **Declaration of Principles**

The Socialist Party of Canada holds:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into an agent of emancipation and the overthrow of plutocratic privilege.
7. That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interest of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
8. The Socialist Party of Canada, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to support these principles to the end that a termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.



# Twin towers downed by terrorists

## The age-old terrorism vs. terrorism struggle now waged on US soil

In America's financial city of gold, New York, bought for a few dollars in trinkets from unknowing aborigines four hundred years ago, a group of suicidal terrorists successfully sliced into and destroyed part of lower Manhattan to the tune of over \$20 billion and massive destruction of human life. Fellow terrorists flew into the Pentagon and Pennsylvania soil. Thousands of American working-class lives were suddenly snuffed out in a matter of a few short minutes. I suppose from the terrorist's point of view it was a successful mission, however a victory that the terrorists themselves will never know. Friends and supporters of the terrorists may know and covet their victory over American capitalist society. To the terrorists things might now appear even as a balance has been reached with American capitalists, who clearly now realize that they are susceptible to reprisals on their continental main-

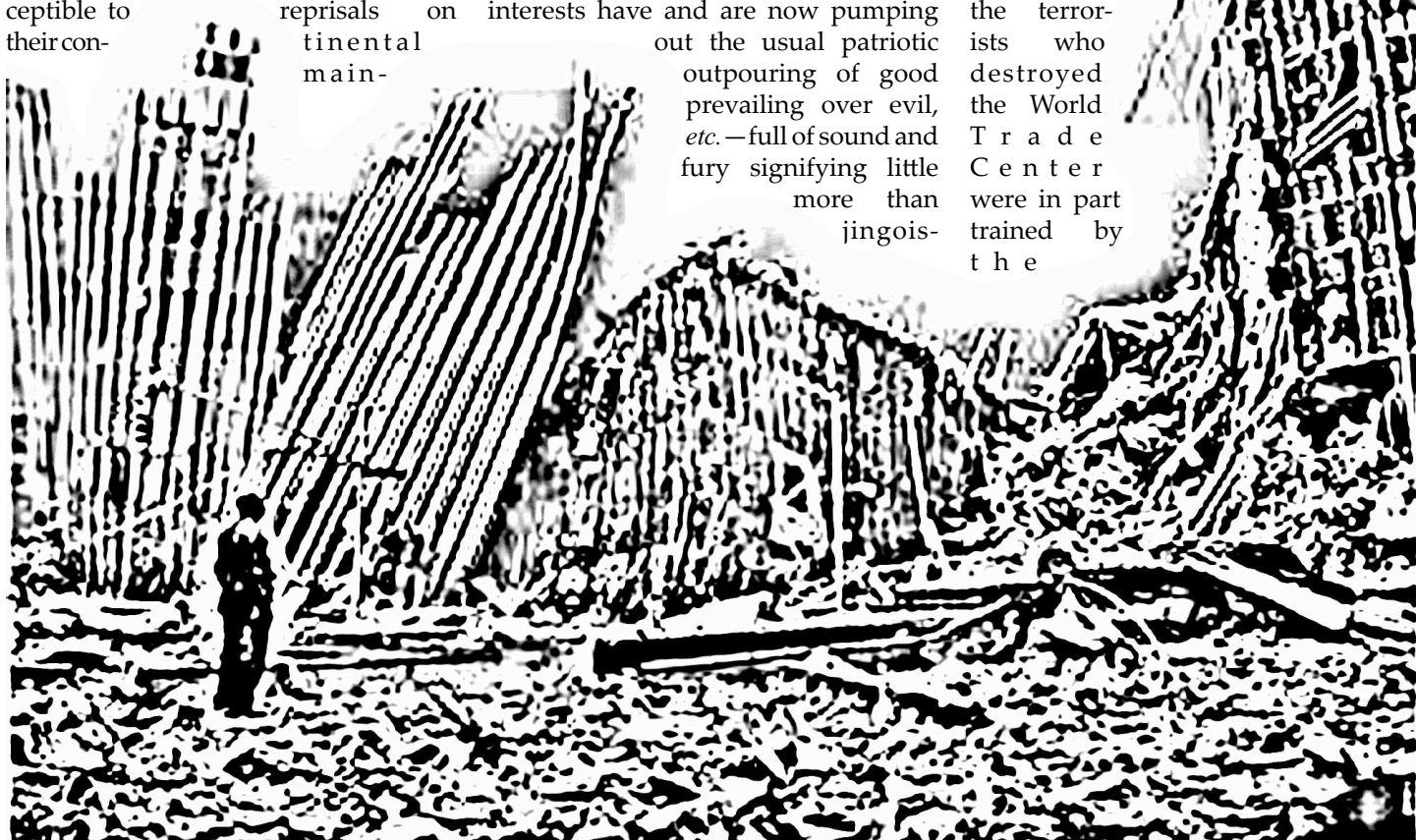
land. Because all nations of the world have adopted the modern capitalist mode of production it in no way means that competition for markets is friendly. Historically, when American capitalists reached out to compete with opposing capitalists over new markets for profits, they engendered conflict and made enemies. The modern terrorists not allied with American capitalist interests are warring with the US just as the US has warred with other capitalist interests in the past. It is a sobering indictment of capitalism that one of its preconditions operating normally is war.

Since the terrorist attacks, it has been suggested by numerous economic spin doctors that because American capitalist property has been breached on home soil for the first time, America is on the economic wane—perhaps. The leaders and defenders of US capitalist interests have and are now pumping out the usual patriotic outpouring of good prevailing over evil, *etc.*—full of sound and fury signifying little more than jingois-

tic hatred of other cultures. I think that it is all too typical that most working-class people in the USA, like in all previous wars, have now been asked to put their lives on the line for the nation. Capitalism, in the eyes of those who own it, must continue. Their propaganda is a cogent reminder of their wish to make this so.

Worldwide, capitalism is homogeneous, yet everywhere capitalist interests are in open economic opposition to each other. Some nations create overt armed forces to expand their "interests"; others covertly train terrorists to do the same. Many of these terrorists receive their training in countries where later on they commit

their acts of terrorism, and in the USA's case, it is a political irony that the terrorists who destroyed the World Trade Center were in part trained by the



US. Is it not ideological hypocrisy that countries like the United States, with large open armed forces, train their own terrorists and euphemistically call them "special forces" or "secret agents"?

As long as capitalism exists, with its laws that allow a privileged few to own the overwhelming majority of the means of life, it will be an increasingly precarious existence for workers facing a world where terrorism will never be wholly eradicated, and in fact, threatens to even escalate! Under the capitalist credo, profits will always come before human lives. It is a system that has empirically proven its inherent anti-life violence to make profit, whose only "true religion" is that of Mammon and the promise of ever-increasing profitability.

In a speech delivered in 1919, President Wilson once made a cogent statement about modern America. He said, "Why, my fellow citizens, is there any man here, or any woman—let's say, is there any child here—who does not know that the seed of war in the modern world is industrial and commercial rivalry?" How honest it would be if President Bush could make such a similar admission. The recent events in the Middle East, including Iraq and Afghanistan, have overtones eerily similar to other wars America has been involved in continuously since its birth as a nation. It might be said that too much emphasis is put on the example of American capitalist interests in this article; however, it is an explicit example of what the world's leading capitalist power is capable of doing in the name of profit. The callous butchery, the indiscriminate slaughter of civilians, the wiping out of communities in defence of capitalism's prescriptive rights for raw materials and new markets, are indicative of capital's normal functioning in protecting and advancing its profits. Many comparable instances involving other nations could be cited throughout the entire span of capitalism's existence. Capitalism's vast production of wealth as a whole is offset by the staggering pov-

erty and suffering it produces in its wake.

The picture we depict here is of capitalism's destructive side, one which overwhelmingly overshadows its constructive side. With such destructiveness in view, our mutual interests and collective common sense, if we are to prosper, demand an alternative.

In contrast to capital's legacy of inherent violence, human beings are by nature highly sociable and cooperative (a realization that capitalists have efficiently exploited yet kept workers ignorant of for over three centuries). In times of crisis genuinely helpful acts and benevolent empathy are the behaviour patterns of the overwhelming majority of people. Their behaviour contradicts the philosophy of greed-driven capitalist accumulation. People are willing to freely volunteer aid in tragedies despite the antisocial conditions capitalism fosters, clearly illustrated by the global outpouring of aid and sheer dedication to help save those people caught in the World Trade Center and Pentagon bombings. If it is truth that workers exploit themselves and continue to collectively run capitalism for their masters against their own interests, then where can we go from here?

I would like to suggest that we have within our grasp the ability to create a democratic worldwide system of society, based on cooperation and common ownership of the means of existence that will end forever the squalor of capitalist economics. With the technological capabilities we presently have to produce surpluses of materials for human needs, we can create enough food, clothing, and shelter, as well as social benefits from scientific innovation, artistic creations, and leisure, so that all people may live satisfying, mutually benefiting, and meaningful lives. The capitalist minority, however, are not ever likely to willingly surrender their position of economic and social privilege. A society of free access would be sustainable only with the understanding, desire, and political volition of the working-class majority

to replace capitalism through the democratic process. It is a type of a world worth striving for, and as John Lennon states in his song "Imagine", "It's easy if you try." His words echo our vision of a society that all of us could be proud to call "civil", and, as another Socialist writer stated over 100 years ago, "Workers of the world, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains!"

—JOLETH

## Obituary

### General Secretary Don Poirier

Don contacted the Party in 1956/58 in Victoria, BC while on shore leave from the Royal Canadian Navy. The local paper had published an interview with SPGB member Gilbert McLatchie (Gilmac) who was on a North American speaking tour. It also announced a meeting that the Victoria local was holding for Gilmac that evening. Don attended with Ruby, one of his sisters.

He consumed the first volume of "Capital" three times during his next naval tour in 1959. Within two years he became very active, running as the Party's candidate in the 1961 Esquimalt/Saanich federal by-election. It not being a general contest, the Party got coast-to-coast media coverage. After organizing a tour of the US and Canada, he helped the Victoria local to pressure city council to establish a "speaker's corner" in Beacon Hill Park. He did the same with the Vancouver local for the Brockton Oval in Stanley Park.

Don worked for Duthies book stores before moving to the forest industry. He loved books and had a bookstore of his own. Don also worked as an independent logger. He became curator of the Forest Museum in Duncan, BC. He fought to better labour conditions while he was a member of the Industrial Workers of America union. He made important safety gains and was instrumental in getting pension rights for all. In the 1970s, Don ran against Jack Munroe for the presidency of the 50,000-member IWA union.

Don died 8 October 2001. The socialist movement has lost an outstanding worker.

Our condolences go out to Don's family, friends, and comrades.

# In Ontario

## New overtime and safety legislation sinks workers' rights to new lows

Toronto recently applied for, and lost, the right to host the 2008 Summer Olympic Games. That in itself is not so interesting, but watching the machinations of the capitalist system is worthy of note. The Province of Ontario, you should understand, despite being "the economic engine" of the country and home to more than a third of Canada's population, is impoverished. The current Tory government, on ascending to power in 1996, deemed that we were in such dire straits that massive cuts in spending on health, education and social programs had to be made. So now we have long waiting lists at emergency rooms and to see medical specialists, a critical nursing shortage, and cases of people dying while their ambulances are rerouted to another hospital that isn't full. Welfare benefits were chopped 20% in 1995 and haven't moved since. The City of Toronto is wrestling with a budget shortfall of some \$350 million and has to charge kids for previously free sports programs. The Toronto Board of Education is so strapped for cash that it is considering closing its large network of swimming pools, to say nothing of its special education programs. The provincial government has got out of the public housing business despite our having more homeless people than ever before, and downloaded its inventory of houses onto Toronto City council as a "gift".

The list goes on and on. Human needs are continually getting shuffled to the bottom of the list. Then along comes word of an Olympic bid and money magically appears for mind-boggling development projects costing billions of dollars, including new sports facilities and swimming pools! Grandiose plans were drawn up for waterfront redevelopment and much was made of the legacy of sports facilities and public housing that would be Toronto's gain. The plans didn't clarify whether

the hundreds of homeless would be removed from the city's streets, parks, and bridges for the duration of the games, as happened in Atlanta and Sydney. The money came from the big developers, whose front men ran the bid, and from government assurances of plentiful money from all levels to keep the jackals on the Olympic committee happy. A campaign costing millions was launched without any public discussion or vote, culminating in a delegation of over 200 members gathering in Moscow for a week. There they met with the Olympic committee, recently disgraced for corruption, to discover they had been easily out-manoeuvred by a bigger set of money hungry capitalists: the Chinese delegation. They were able to promise delivery of over 400 million children, all eager to try on Nike shoes and other corporate products. No contest. Thankfully, Toronto's delegation returned home empty-handed and the people were only out a few million for the bid instead of billions for the games themselves. Of course, the promised money has disappeared and won't be available to provide the necessary services we so desperately need.

The Walkerton inquiry is winding down and lawyers' summations are being delivered. In case you missed it, in the spring of 2000, the town of Walkerton's water supply became contaminated with *E. coli* bacteria, resulting in seven deaths and 2300 people becoming sick. The manager of the system admitted he falsified records and ignored the problem while health officials were scrambling to find the cause of the sickness. The provincial government prefers to take the narrow view that the manager was the sole culprit in order to take the spotlight from their own cost-cutting measures. The environment ministry was slashed 50-60% in funding and man-

power, but the premier of the province, Mike Harris, testified at the enquiry that the cabinet received no warning that budget cuts and privatizing testing labs would pose any threat to the public. It was deemed by the cabinet to be a "manageable risk". The enquiry heard, however, that at the time of the cuts, then health minister Jim Wilson was concerned that private testing labs were not required to notify health officials if a drinking water system was found to be contaminated. The lab testing Walkerton's water told only the manager who chose to ignore the report.

Obviously, the safeguards that had been in place fell apart with reduced funding, and private testing labs were not instructed how to communicate properly with public health institutions. This allowed the manager's duplicity to go undetected. Subsequent investigation revealed other factors in the tragedy, such as a crumbling infrastructure that successive local governments had failed to find money to replace, and the presence of huge amounts of pig effluence from the large factory farms in the area. These factors can be charged to our system of putting money and profits before human need.

Incredibly, on the heels of the Walkerton tragedy, the provincial government continues to put the lives and well-being of its citizens at risk. Recently passed was Bill 57, euphemistically titled the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Opponents believe it will lead to needless death and injury in the workplace. The law abolishes the right of workers to refuse to work in unsafe conditions and to have a ministry inspector immediately adjudicate the dispute. In addition, the bill revokes the mandatory reporting provisions with respect to the introduction of new (possibly hazardous) materials,

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# Working class a modern invention

**continued from page 1**

(the few)—this arrangement is entirely human-made.

We, as workers, have a history. You see, what we call the working class didn't always exist. It was created.

Some six hundred years ago, the idea of a vast majority of people really owning nothing except their ability to work and working for a wage or salary in order to survive would have been considered preposterous.

That old philosopher Karl Marx made the comment that capitalism came into existence with much violence and bloodshed. It's true. Peasants— independent producers—were driven by starvation from their land. Clan systems of ownership such as in Scotland and Ireland were forcibly destroyed. Small producers of goods had their livelihoods taken away from them. People were forced into the cities and towns through arrest, starvation, or maiming by the powers that be, with assistance from the Church and State laws.

It was a common occurrence across the face of Europe. In Africa, whole peoples were torn from their homes and sold as slaves. Capital and those who owned and controlled it conquered every sphere of activity to make a society where everything is for sale with a view to profit (and the profit for a few). It made inroads to destroy the economies of South America and Asia.

At each stage of the game there was revolt by our ancestors because being forced to work in factories and workshops for a wage meant dehumanization on a vast scale. Workers stood ready to smash the machines and workshops; they rallied to build unions (often at the expense of their own lives, brutalization, threats, exile, and imprisonment). At times they rose to desperately try to change these conditions.

Our history is a history of struggle against a system where the profit of capital is the be all and end all of production. It has been a struggle in which

many died for the right to organize into unions, for the right to vote, for the right not to work sixteen hours a day, to stop forced child labour, to stop our exploitation, for the right not to starve, for the right to at least a minimal education in schools where we are taught that this and only this is the best of all possible worlds.

We have been divided by clever mystifications, by the colour of our skin, men against women, one religion against another, and on the basis of sexual preference, and it has been used well against us, making us compete against each other and making us ready to wage war upon each other at the whim of governments.

When the cost in human misery was too great, a myriad of reforms was presented by politicians—a tinkering with the system to attempt to put a human face on it. Yet reform after reform has not brought us any closer to any solution of the problems inherent in the system itself.

Old notions die hard. Just as the rulers of ancient empires told their slaves that slavery was the natural order of things, and just as the feudal lords told the serfs and peasants that their society reflected the natural order, so we too are told that capitalism and the rule of profit is natural; that there is no alternative. It's taught to us in

schools, through the media, through the regulation of everything we do.

What they have not been able to take away from us is our ability to think. There *is* an alternative.

Everything that has been built around us is the result of our work and yet we don't work for ourselves. The fundamental fact is that this system we call capitalism, like any other economic system, is the creation of men and women. And men and women can choose other systems.

As long as a system is in place, be it the so-called "free market" or state control (what some people mistakenly or deliberately pass off as "socialism"), workers will remain in their positions and nothing can change. Society will remain geared to the creation of profit, a society ruled by the needs of capital rather than the real needs of people.

Some of us have banded together. We call ourselves Socialists and have joined the Socialist Party of Canada, working together with other companion political parties in the World Socialist Movement. We are not politicians, we do not propose to lead anyone to the "promised land", we do not advocate reforms or state controls, and we do not promise any utopias. We too are workers, but with a vision of workers creating a fundamentally different kind of society. It can be done.

—LEN WALLACE

Interested in learning more about socialism? The following members of the Socialist Party of Canada have volunteered themselves as regional contacts.

**Cobourg, ON:** John Ayers, (905) 377-8190, [jpayers@sympatico.ca](mailto:jpayers@sympatico.ca)  
**Windsor, ON:** Len Wallace, [llwallace@mnsi.net](mailto:llwallace@mnsi.net)  
**Victoria, BC:** Tony Gelsthorpe, (250) 384-5789, [tonyge@juno.com](mailto:tonyge@juno.com)  
**St. John's, NF:** Joshua Tremblett, (709) 722-7941, [juoshuatremblett@hotmail.com](mailto:juoshuatremblett@hotmail.com);  
Kevin Moulton, [kmoulton@roadrunner.nf.net](mailto:kmoulton@roadrunner.nf.net)

We also invite you to write us for a free package of introductory literature. Drop us a line at the usual address:

**The Socialist Party of Canada**  
Box 4280  
Victoria, BC V8X 3X8  
e-mail: [spc@iname.com](mailto:spc@iname.com)

## In Ontario

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and replaces the regulation of workplace hazards with unenforceable codes of practice. As with the environment, employers are increasingly responsible for policing themselves.

All this is part of the Tories' "Ontario is open for business" stance that has seen systematic attacks on labour and unions, and has set us back 50 years in workplace conditions. Certifying unions has been made more difficult and decertifying them easier. Government respect for workers reached new heights with the introduction of the 60-hour work week the day after Labour Day! Yes, it's now legal to employ workers for 60 hours per week (up from 48). This legislation also eliminated mandatory overtime after 44 hours in favour of a four-week averaging system. This means you could have work weeks of 60, 40, 40, and 35 hours in a month and not receive any overtime pay. So much for putting all our efforts into trying to reform the capitalist system into one that cares about and works for all! Surely, no one can now doubt in this province that our present economic system is solely about the accumulation of wealth, and in no way about supplying human needs unless a profit can be made by doing so.

—J. AYERS

## Newswatch

### Good news for evil bosses

Miserable people make better workers than happy ones—at least, that's the finding of a new University of Alberta study. The researchers, headed by Robert Sinclair and Carrie Lavis, studied four groups of workers on a circuit board assembly line. They report that workers who described themselves as happy made twice as many errors as sad people. The BBC (13 June) predicts the study may "spell the end for bonding weekends, company songs and other attempts at corporate jollity."

### How much will they be charging for tickets next year?

No longer is mindless activism the exclusive purview of the left—ardent right-wingers took to the streets on 2 December for the first global Walk for Capitalism (<http://www.WalkForCapitalism.org/>). The Walk, conceived as a reaction to the recent spate of anti-globalization protests, aimed to promote capitalism as "the greatest benefactor man has ever had." In order that participants could observe firsthand the many benefits of global capitalism, perhaps the Walk should have included a leg through one of Nike's Vietnamese sweatshops.

### This book will self-destruct in 15 seconds

On 16 July, FBI agents arrested Russian programmer Dmitry Sklyarov at a conference in Las Vegas, reports the *Las Vegas Sun* (18 July). He was subsequently charged with violating the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, a law which makes it a criminal offence to publish software that circumvents access controls on digital media. Sklyarov had written a program that allows users of Adobe Systems' electronic book software to disable restrictions the publisher may have imposed, such as a restriction on having the book read aloud by speech synthesis software. A blind person, for example, could use Sklyarov's software to listen to a book. Despite the fact that the program was never published in the USA, and is perfectly legal in most other countries, including Canada and his native Russia, Sklyarov has now been indicted and faces up to 25 years in prison plus a \$375,000 fine. To the delight of Canadian publishing magnates, the Government of Canada already has plans underway to develop its own version of the DMCA.

—Psy

## Handicapitalism by Jin Wicked & Psy

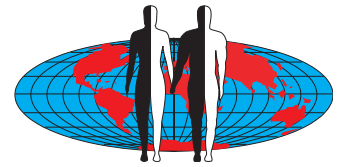




# IMAGINE

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## Hunger in Canada

A Southam news report published on 16 August 2001 informs us that “[a]bout 2.5 million Canadians, including tens of thousands of middle class families, had problems putting food on the table at least once in 1998–99, Statistics Canada said Wednesday.” Canada, however, is a net exporter of food. It is also a nation which is known to be “the best country in the world to live” according to the United Nations Development Programme. Yet, despite these facts, another family study conducted for Human Resources Development Canada found that 1.6% of Canadian families with children under age 12 reported experiencing hunger in 1996.

It is clear from both studies that for most of those reporting hunger, it was not an everyday event. But the 8% of Canadians reporting “food insecurity” is a condemnation of the social structure under which we live today. As much as some might argue that these people are lazy, uneducated, or responsible for their own plight, the fact is that there are a lot of hungry children and adults. Many people are honestly worried about their ability to feed themselves, but this is not because there isn’t enough food, but rather that capitalism allocates food, and everything else, in a strange way. Rather than allocating food to those who are hungry, capitalism allocates food to those who have the money to pay for it. Under capitalism, food is a commodity, like other things for sale, to be sold with a view to profit.

Under capitalist logic, if nobody wants to purchase your ability to labour, then you will not work. Capitalism has no obligation to feed you and your children. And, because capitalist economics has its continuous cycles of “booms and busts”, it is only really necessary to keep the pool of unemployed workers on the dole for the next anticipated “boom”. Also, the nasty habit of people to revolt when they suffer from too much hardship ensures that enough money keeps trickling down to the working class (90% or more of the population) to stave off the worst pangs of starvation. It matters little whether the money is in the form of government handouts, food subsidies, or other forms of charity. The “bottom line” under capitalism is that the working class keeps producing profits for the capitalists, not that workers get enough to eat.

Some will fault the above noted StatsCan study for including  
**see FOOD INSECURITY, page 4**

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# Socialism Q&A

## Higher wages, better benefits—a futile struggle?

**I**s it worthwhile for the worker to struggle for gains in wages and benefits if this will cause an increase in prices and negate his efforts?

This is a common argument of the capitalist class to discourage workers from taking action to improve their lot, and depends on the fraudulent claims that the price of commodities will in fact rise, that the price of commodities depends on the price of labour, and that the capitalist can raise his prices as he pleases.

Firstly, a pay increase will mean increased spending by the workers on their usual necessities—food, clothing, household goods, *etc.* This increased demand will cause prices to rise temporarily. However, this increase in prices ensures that the capitalist producing those products will be compensated for paying out higher wages. The capitalist producing luxury goods will experience a drop in sales and profits because

overall demand of all goods will remain the same and if the demand for necessities rises, then demand for luxuries must fall. Thus the luxury producers will be hit with increased wages and falling sales and profits. This will bring about a transfer of capital and labour to the production of those goods giving the highest rate of profit (necessities) until supply equals or exceeds demand and prices fall to their original level or lower. For proof that higher wages don't mean higher prices, Marx points out (*Value, Price & Profit*) that the English worker was higher paid than workers in other European countries, but English products undersold those of their competitors.

The price of commodities does not depend on the price of labour. Marx has shown that the value of a commodity is determined by the socially necessary labour time required to produce an article: "As the exchangeable values of commodities are only social functions of those things, and have nothing to do with natural qualities, we must first ask, 'What is the common social substance of all commodities?' It is labour." (*Value Price & Profit*) Price is simply the monetary expression of value. The market price may fluctuate up and down from the value according to supply and demand, but always tends towards the natural price (*i.e.*, the expression of value as quantities of equal social labour) and over the long term sells at this price.

Therefore, as price is set by value, and value is the amount of socially necessary labour crystallized in a commodity, and as any price fluctuations are due to supply and demand, then it is clear that the capitalist cannot raise his prices on a whim, however much he may want to.

In conclusion, we must state that, as wages depend on supply and demand, rising when demand outstrips supply and falling when supply outstrips

demand, the worker should take advantage of any opportune time to increase his wages and benefits. This, of course, must be done when demand for labour is high, as it would be economic suicide to do so when demand is low. It must be seen that any advantage gained could easily be wiped out at the next recession or legislative attack on labour. One has only to examine the record of the current Tory government of Ontario's record of labour legislation to see that the lot of the workers can be set back fifty years at the stroke of a pen. Secondly, as the capitalist cannot raise his prices whenever and to whatever level he pleases, wage increases must come from gaining a greater share of the profits. The capitalist must resist any loss of his portion of the profits, thus creating the inevitable and continuous conflict between worker and capitalist. Consequently, the worker should be aware that the fight for better wages is secondary to the main goal of overthrowing the wage system and replacing it with a system of democratic control of the means of production by, and in the interests of, the people. The social conditions under which Marx wrote have altered little in their general character since he addressed *Value, Price & Profit* to the First International Working Men's Association in 1865. What he states about the limitations of trade unions holds as equally true for today as it did when he wrote it: "Trades Unions work well as centres of resistance against the encroachment of capital. They fail partly from an injudicious use of their power. They fail generally from limiting themselves to a guerilla war against the effects of the existing system, instead of simultaneously trying to change it, instead of using their organized forces as a lever for the final emancipation of the working class, that is to say, the ultimate abolition of the wages system."

—TORONTO SOCIALIST DISCUSSION GROUP

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The Socialist Party of Canada provides educational material and forums to explain capitalism and socialism, and works to promote working class understanding of socialism. Although primarily active in Canada, the Party sends information to people around the world.

The Socialist Party of Canada was founded in 1905. It is a companion party in an international organization of socialist parties known as the World Socialist Movement, whose Object and Declaration of Principles can be found elsewhere in this issue.

# Africa's debt

## Free market capitalism a specious solution

While the leaders of the wealthiest governments forming the G8 met in Calgary, Alberta, protests were made across Canada demanding aid to African governments burdened with financial debt.

African state officials attended the G8 conference begging relief from the crushing debt their states owe to western powers. Their developing and competing states have seen poverty, continual wars, miserable health conditions—much of it the result of three centuries of western capitalist powers carving out their spheres of influence through colonization and unabated economic exploitation. The legacy is a cycle of developing and small capitalist states' economic dependence on the more rapacious and developed capitalist states.

Celebrities have joined the chorus of those advocating billions of dollars of financial aid. Others, like U2's rock star Bono, demand that western governments, banks, and capitalists forgive the debt of the African states. Both reason that this will free up needed monies for pressing social problems: poverty, rampant health problems, and building needed economic infrastructure.

Their hearts are in the right place, but what they propose as the solutions, or at least the beginnings of solutions—to provide Africa with needed breathing space to "catch up" to western capitalist states—falls short of their goal despite Africa's problems being real enough.

One recent report suggests nearly 600 million people will be living in extreme poverty in sub-Saharan Africa by the year 2016 (BBC News, Monday, 13 May 2002, "UK Blair pressed over Africa poverty").

Such forecasts mirror poverty worldwide. Presently under global capitalism half the world's population live on less than \$2 a day, a fifth surviving

on half of that. Some 30 000 children die each day because of poverty (Susan George, Associate director Amsterdam Transnational Institute). Sweatshops and the misery of child labour, such as in India's silk manufacturing industry where children as young as ten years old work seven days a week for a pittance, are the conditions of work for many. Meanwhile, multinational corporations reap the profits from their labour (CBC News Report, 23 June), so altering the relationship between labour and capital is one thing they'd prefer not to do.

Yet, while this sanctioned misery for Africa's labouring poor carries on, hired ideologists and apologists beating the drum of free enterprise suggest that what Africa really needs is not more aid but a good dose of free market capitalism.

These economic spin doctors weave fractured fairy tales of capitalism's glories where commodities, demand and supply, and money reign supreme. To them Africa's economic woes can only be overcome by the free reign of "the market," and if that means the further tightening of belts amongst the working class then so be it. They tell us that there is no other alternative. In their view, capitalism is the best of all possible systems—which is not surprising, because it's 'their system' and they draw their parasitical existence from it.

The so-called "radical" solutions of forgiving state debt or massive foreign aid do nothing to solve the root of the problem—capitalism itself—a system based upon exploitation, where commodities must be sold with a view to profit. Simply, it is the way the system functions. It is not, and never can be, a system that deals with people as human beings, to provide them with the things they need. Those who try

*continued on page 7*

## The Socialist Party of Canada

### Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of society as a whole.

### Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Canada holds:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into an agent of emancipation and the overthrow of plutocratic privilege.
7. That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interest of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
8. The Socialist Party of Canada, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to support these principles to the end that a termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.



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# “Food insecurity” rampant: StatsCan

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continued from page 1

the concept of “food insecurity”. There is a popular myth that unless people are actually starving to death, their lives are really not all that bad. This goes hand in hand with blaming the victim—the parents of those hungry children—for their poverty and hunger. The belief that somehow the poverty of others does not affect those who feel that they are well fed is a misconception. It affects them. Nobody is immune to the poverty that is inherent under capitalism. The richest person in the world spends money to protect himself from becoming poor, and the poorest of the world incessantly try to flee it.

The Right blames the poor for their poverty, yet concedes that charity is a good way to deal with things like feeding the hungry. The Left takes their own approach, blaming the capitalists for not being benevolent enough. They promote government handouts to help the poor. The Left has given up on the idea of ending poverty, except perhaps in the oh-so-distant future. Their schemes to make poverty somehow more bearable, which do not address the problem, are an insult to the workers and ignore the truth about what is causing people to go hungry.

We socialists, however, look beyond the discomforts of poverty that both the Right and Left suggest we have to put up with. We examine the root cause. Despite the past 150 years or so that the Left, Right and Centre have tried to argue that we are wrong about their failures to reform capitalism, all their numerous schemes have not ended poverty and hunger. They still wish us to believe that their policies can make poverty better for the poor.

The Right has tried to show how poverty has eased with little or no state interference, even going so far as to mislead any who might listen that state interference is actually the cause of poverty in the first place. (See the essay,

“End Poverty by Ending Welfare As We Know It” by Fred McMahon in the forthcoming book, *Memos to the Prime Minister: What Canada Should Be in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, John Wiley & Sons Canada Ltd.). Likewise, The Centre’s sway from Left to Right does nothing to end hunger either.

**“Capitalism allocates  
resources based upon how  
much money you have.  
Socialism, when the working  
class finally decides to  
establish it, will allocate  
resources based upon  
human need.”**

Socialists claim that the NDP, Canadian Alliance, Liberals, Greens, Conservatives, Communist Party, etc. have not failed outright, however. On the contrary, they have been remarkably successful—successful at maintaining capitalism! No matter how awful capitalism is proven to be for the working class, no matter how many times people say, “Never again!” No matter how many people go hungry, live in poverty, are cold and sick, are maimed or killed in wars or industrial “accidents”, capitalism holds its ubiquitous grip on the working class.

Yet the working class does not have to succumb to the pretense of choices offered by the Left, Right and Centre.

We socialists claim that there is no need for poverty. We claim that replacing capitalism with socialism can end hunger and poverty. We claim that our analysis of capitalism shows we are right. We claim that the working class runs capitalism for the capitalists, by and large. We claim that everything that has ever been built has been built by working people. We claim that there is no need for capitalists or capitalism.

Some people from the Left blame capitalists for society’s problems. Socialists most emphatically state that no one should hate capitalists. Rather we state, just as emphatically, that as long as the working class acquiesces to capitalism—working for wages—capitalists are getting us to do exactly what they want. The capitalists are exploiting us by living off the profits derived from our labour. Capitalists pay us less than the value of our labour, and yet, by the logic of capitalism, when we sell our labour power we are not being cheated. Our ability to work is a commodity bought and sold like all other things in the market place. It is the very epitome of fair dealing under capitalism and most people show their support for it by their acquiescence.

If you cannot find a buyer for your ability to work, then you are of almost no use to capitalism. Your continued existence is next to meaningless from the perspective of capitalism. However, the unemployed poor are not useless to capital. The poor spur those who do work to do whatever is necessary to remain employed, including accepting pay cuts. Of course, employment doesn’t end poverty. Sometimes it doesn’t even end hunger. But it does ensure profits are made, keeping the rich rich and the working class in servitude.

It is capitalism at which we socialists direct our severest criticism, because it is capitalism itself, (by its very logic of profit before people), that is the prob-

lem. Capitalism is a class-divided society in which the capitalist class owns and enjoys the wealth produced by the majority working class, and as long as society remains this way, the majority will suffer. Food insecurity is one level of this suffering, and fearing being poorer than you already are is yet another level of suffering.

**C**apitalism allocates resources based upon how much money you have. Socialism, when the working class finally decides to establish it, will allocate resources based

upon human need. If you need food, you will take it. In such a society, hunger will not exist. To end hunger, and the plethora of horrors which socialists show are caused by a class divided society, all we need to do is understand reality, and work to eliminate the barriers to a cooperative society. It sounds simple, but one of the reasons that this idea has not materialized is because we need to overcome the Left's popular, mythic ignorance of what socialism means.

So, the first step is to stop believing the empty promises of capitalism's Left,

Right and Centre. The second step is to put trust in ourselves: we who have built the society in which we live—the working class. The third step is to stop believing that we can do nothing to change society—this is simply capitalist hoodwinking! Join with us in the knowledge that we can create a society to satisfy everyone's needs. Join with us to build a society that can resolve the problems that today evade solution because capitalist interests take preference over our own interests.

—ANON.

### About our logo

Logos are omnipresent in our society today, mainly to invite support and loyalty to an organization. Thus sports teams, non-governmental organizations, governments and especially businesses, large and small, use logos constantly in the hope of establishing product identification in the consumer's mind. All are competing for your attention, shopping loyalty, and above all, your dollars. So what about our logo? The "One World, One People" logo of the World Socialist Movement embodies many of our beliefs and seeks to put our case before you.

"One World" means that we see the world as one continuous co-operative entity rather than a world that is divided into competing sectors or countries. Socialists see a world without boundaries, where co-operation and mutual help will take place between autonomous and largely self-sufficient regions. As there will be no money or trade, there will be nothing to go to war for. If one region is deficient in steel, for example, it need only request the amount needed from a steel-producing area. By contrast, the competing sectors and countries in the present world have arbitrary boundaries drawn on a map by groups of competing capitalists to mark their control of resources in a particular region. They continually seek to extend their boundaries or influence to include other resource-rich areas and trade routes. Protecting these spheres of influence inevitably leads to war, a constant state in capitalism. Afghanistan is a prime example. Created by Britain in the 19th century to provide a buffer between its empire and that of Russia, it threw together many culturally disparate groups and created a recipe for turmoil lasting to the present time. George Bush's war in this country is certainly more about establishing hegemony to secure oil and gas pipeline routes than it is about stopping terrorism.

"One World" would mean a world council, elected democratically from all the various regions to solve world problems, armed with the knowledge and tools to do the job properly. The petty squabbles and usual monetary constraints responsible for today's tragic lack of action on such pressing global problems as

starvation, poverty, homelessness, and environmental degradation would not exist. Thus, an agreed course of action to improve the environment could not be vetoed by a single country, as the Americans did to the Kyoto agreement, feeble as it was, with the excuse that saving the environment would hurt that country's economy (read: profits). In socialism, if something needs doing to improve our conditions, *it will be done*. We need only have the will to seek the knowledge and resources required.

The "One People" part of our logo refers to the fact that we are all members of one race—the human race—and we share the same planet along with multitudes of other species. We all have similar needs—food, water, shelter, health, education, security, *etc.* The disorder of capitalist production and distribution of wealth means that all workers, companies and regions must compete to grab as much material wealth for themselves as possible, to the detriment of others who become the losers in the system. Thus, we currently have 20% of the world's population in North America, Western Europe, Japan and Australasia consuming 80% of the world's resources, mostly in a blatantly wasteful fashion. Socialists hold that the planet's resources, if managed properly, can provide more than all the essential needs for a full and productive life for everyone. Further, after abolishing the capitalist economic and class system, there will no longer exist hierarchies of social privilege or class divisions. Will we, then, be all the same? Of course not! There

will still be different cultures, languages, food, literature, and arts that will continue to flourish and enrich the lives of all. They'll just be able to develop better without the constant barrage of the Golden Arches, Mickey Mouse, and Swoosh logos they are subjected to today. It is obvious that availing ourselves of these cultural riches will benefit all, and gone will be the present capitalist rationalization to go to war with other nations and cultures for reasons that have nothing to do with ordinary workers. This is what socialism can and will achieve. When it will happen is up to you—when you and our fellow workers embrace the concept and inaugurate it. *Hasten the day!*

—J. AYERS



# In Ontario

## Housing, electricity woes: “profit before people” the true culprit

It's not surprising that we encounter poverty in Ontario. After all, it's an inevitable by-product of the capitalist economic system throughout the world. The workers cannot continually give up most of the wealth they create through their labour to the small group of affluent owners of the means of production without a considerable portion of them being deprived of the necessities of life. Nor should we be particularly surprised just because we live in Canada's richest province, which has recently experienced an unprecedented wealth-creating boom with the US, or because twelve years ago the federal government, with the support of all parties, pledged to eliminate child poverty by the turn of the century. Child poverty has actually risen 39% in that period despite a projected five-year budget surplus of well over \$100 billion, and anyone would be disturbed by the statistics and the effect on children. For instance, the Daily Bread Food Bank in the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives's magazine, *Monitor* (Vol. 8, No. 7, December 2001), reported 50 000 children in Canada's largest city, Toronto, and 125 000 in Ontario, live in families that need to use a food bank or similar emergency food program. The median monthly income for food bank users is \$1087, from which an average \$758.50 must be deducted for rent, leaving just \$3.81 per person per day to meet all other needs, not just food. While most of these families are on welfare, almost one third have at least one parent working but still need regular assistance. While parents regularly go hungry, the effect on children is shown by the following:

- 24.5% live in families who have been evicted or threatened with eviction.
- 56% cannot afford public transportation.

- 25% live in houses rated as poor and 20.5% are waiting for social housing.
- 12% rely on a school breakfast program and 9% on a school snack program.

The first act of the current provincial government when elected in 1995 was to slash welfare payments by 20% and they have not been increased since, losing a further 15% to inflationary erosion. Additionally, this government claws back every dollar received by these families from the National Child Benefit Supplement (a federal program to put nutritious food in the mouths of hungry children) from their provincial welfare payments. In other words, these poor people are helping to fund the provincial government's handouts and tax cuts to big business and to the wealthy.

It doesn't get any better either when it comes to housing. The *Toronto Star* article “Housing Solutions Are Elusive” (24 November 2001) underscores the housing problem. In the year 2000, 1000 households were evicted every week for inability to pay rent. Some 200 000 Toronto families spend more than 50% of their income on rent, even though paying just 30% of income is deemed “affordable”. The federal government, perhaps slightly embarrassed by giving away \$100 billion of its expected five-year surplus (mainly to the already wealthy or comfortable through tax refunds) has offered \$680 million for affordable housing to the whole of Canada over the next four years, provided the provinces will match this. If they do, and this is far from certain, Ontario's share will be \$244.5 million, enough to build 4 800 units of the 16 000 units Toronto will need.

Both these problems of food and housing could be easily corrected in short order. We already have enough food for everyone to enjoy a nutritious diet and we certainly have the skilled

workers and raw materials to meet the housing needs in this city that assimilates 100 000 new immigrants every year. The problem lies, of course, with the profit system. There's no profit in providing food and housing to people who have just \$3.81 a day. The capitalist system never has been able, and never will be able to provide these absolutely basic needs to all of society. This can only be done for those who can pay. Incredibly, the Daily Bread Food Bank and many other such well-meaning agencies never seem to be able to figure this out. They call for remedies such as a petition to restore the Child Benefit Supplement, or increase the welfare payments or minimum wage a few cents. While I applaud their efforts to help feed the hungry and house the homeless, it would be nice to read, just once, that more people are with us in revealing that the capitalist economic system of putting profit before people is the rightful culprit.

### Power to the people

The current provincial government rode to power on the strength of the “Common Sense Revolution” which generally aped Reaganomics and Thatcherism, giving high priority to privatization and deep spending cuts in the public domain. Thus, Ontario Hydro, having provided Ontarians with consistent, price-controlled electricity since its inception in 1906, is in the process of being turned into a private company. The utility was split into two entities early in the Tories' mandate creating a power-generating company and a power-transmitting company a few years ago in anticipation of opening up the privately owned energy market. The reasons for the delay are political, not ideological. Two jurisdictions that tried this ahead of Ontario, California and Alberta, have already run into some embarrassing problems.

**see BAY STREET, page 8**



# Corporate scandals

## Bush Jr.'s "tough talk" all bark, no bite

**E**conomic "scandals" have always been part and parcel of the system of capitalism. A tiny minority reaps in vast quantities of wealth while the vast majority of us (the working class) must be content with the crumbs, hoping that we do not fall into the cess-pool of unemployment.

Recently, public outrage has grown against corporate powers such as Enron, WorldCom and Xerox, where accounting books have been doctored and workers' pension investments have been embezzled, share prices artificially inflated, and the (capitalist) economy thrown into turmoil resulting in thousands of workers being sacked.

The corporate media have seized upon the issue. The problem looms so large that it cannot be ignored. Even US President George Bush, Jr. has been forced to enter the fray. He has been reported by some media as presenting a new "anti-corporatist" sentiment, a new form of populism to bolster sagging ratings when it comes to domestic economic issues. Indeed, he has openly stated that corporations should be more "accountable".

It's not the first time in US history that presidents have had to step in. At

the turn of the 20th century, President Theodore Roosevelt's reputation was that of a "trust breaker" against capitalism's robber barons and the growing monopolization of industry. Similarly, Franklin Delano Roosevelt advocated public works during the economic breakdown of the Great Depression in the 1930s, much to the consternation of some capitalists.

However, as well-sounding as these Presidents' words ring to some, what we are really seeing with Bush's "tough talk" is a bark without much of a bite in terms of working class interests or real protection. How correct Karl Marx was when he stated that governments are nothing more than the executive committees of the capitalist class. The capitalist politicians, such as Bush, are just the water-boys trying to ensure the survival of the capitalist system, and I am sure we will see many more corporation rip-offs and dodges such as Enron, WorldCom and Xerox in the future. This is how the system works—it's a social system of waste, corruption, and contempt for working people and it is high time we send it packing.

—LEN WALLACE

# Africa's debt

*continued from page 3*

to put a human face on it ultimately deceive themselves because reforms do not remove the system that engenders poverty—it postpones it.

**T**he continent of Africa is rich in resources and in the human ability and intelligence to meet their own needs. Contrary to cow towing to the capitalist game, the solution can only be a fundamentally different kind of society where production is solely for use, without profits or wages, where all people of the world democratically determine their future for themselves. This is the basis of what we in the Socialist Party stand for—Real Socialism—Real Democracy.

Those who have been dubbed as part of the "anti-globalist" movement may argue that change is needed now. Socialists agree. What we advocate is a real change now, not a tinkering with the capitalist system. The movement toward a better, sane world fit for human beings would be a much more strategic use of our energies if devoted for that very fundamental change—Socialism, Now.

—LEN WALLACE

## Interested in learning more about socialism?

The following members of the Socialist Party of Canada have volunteered themselves as regional contacts.

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We also invite you to write us for a free package of introductory literature. Drop us a line at the usual address:

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# Bay Street berserk over Hydro proposal

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In California, skyrocketing rates and rolling brown-outs were the order of the day last winter, prompting state officials to consider returning power to the public sector, a move saved only by the recession and consequent lower energy demand. In Alberta, the original flag-wavers for privatization, the steel and petrochemical industries, cried foul when their bills for energy quadrupled.

These examples made it politically dangerous for the Ontario Tories to proceed with their usual haste and disregard of public opinion, but the clincher was the squabble between the industrialists and the Bay Street financiers. Speaking for the industrialists, lobbyist Dan Macnamara said, "In theory, free-market competition is great; in practice, it doesn't seem to work—at least not in the electricity industry." (Toronto Star, 15 December 2001) Ontario's big power users, such as Dofasco Steel, wanted to turn electricity into a non-profit co-operative committed to delivering cheap and reliable power, much like what Adam Beck established in 1906 and is now in the process of being dismantled. Ian Urquhart, writ-

ing in the Toronto Star (15 December 2001), commented on this situation, stating, "The rest of Bay Street, and their mouthpieces in the financial press, went berserk when the news first broke that the government was seriously considering the non-profit option." Advocates of this option were accused of "being fixated on keeping prices low" (as if that were a bad thing) and of trying to "shackle" Hydro One. Yet the financiers pressed for the sale to go through, expecting to make as much as \$200 million in commissions and fees. Additionally, Hydro One's senior managers, including the utility's chair, Sir Graham Day, a major proponent of privatization under Thatcher, pushed to go ahead with deregulation because this would give them huge windfalls by reaping lucrative stock options. Day, always looking for the easiest way to cash in, threatened to go elsewhere if the sale did not go through. In the end,

Premier Harris pressed ahead with privatization, even as he was resigning his position, and will not be around to take the resulting heat when prices go up.

Through all of this, consideration for the needs of the average consumers struggling to pay their bills is nowhere to be heard. They are right to be concerned. Capitalism demands that commodities be sold in the highest paying market, *i.e.*, the one ensuring the highest profits. To our south lies the giant US economy, eager to take our energy and already paying up to 50% more than we are. Indeed, Hydro One has already applied for permission to lay a transmission cable under Lake Erie to points south. So either we pay more, much more, or we freeze in the dark. This is the capitalist system in action, nothing to do with socially controlled hydro—needs can only be met if you have the money to pay for them.

—J. AYERS

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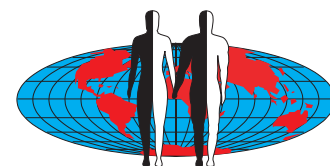
## Handicapitalism by Jin Wicked & Psy

Reformism in Medieval times...



# IMAGINE

VOL. 2 NO. 1  
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OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF  
THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA

## No war but the class war!

Once again another bloody capitalist war has broken out. The US and GB have ignored the objections of most of the world and invaded a country that posed no threat to any of the coalition countries and for reasons that seem illusory, even to the most casual observer. This has brought unprecedented street demonstrations against the war around the world. The Socialist Party of Canada and its companion parties of the World Socialist Movement have opposed all wars, except the class war, since it first formulated a policy regarding armed conflicts in response to the First World War. It is worth reiterating our position at this time by quoting the Manifesto of the Socialist Party of Canada on War printed in "The Western Socialist" (October 1939):

It is in the nature of capitalism that in their quest for markets, raw materials, sources of exploitation, *etc.*, the respective capitalists of the world are engaged in a constant, competitive struggle, either to preserve or to gain advantages over their rival: and by virtue of their control of the powers of government they are in the position to transfer this struggle from the economic field to the military field, where they endeavour to gain by wholesale slaughter, what they have been unable to gain by other means. This is the explanation, not only of previous wars, but also of the

present war. Thus, the declarations of the ruling class propagandist agencies that this conflict is being waged for democracy, freedom, and the independence of small nations, are merely the bait that must be used if the active participation of the politically uneducated workers is to be gained.

The Socialist Party of Canada, in placing on record its opposition to this new, horrible demonstration of capitalism's unfitness to survive, herewith reaffirms:

That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living by the capitalist class and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced;

That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess;

That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the capitalist class and the conversion into common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people;

That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from

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the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of plutocratic privilege.

The Socialist Party of Canada further declares that no interest is at stake in this conflict which justifies the shedding of a single drop of working class blood; and it extends its fraternal greetings to the workers of all countries and calls upon them to unite in the Greater Struggle, the struggle for the establishment of Socialism, a system of society in which the ever-increasing poverty, misery, terror, and bloodshed of capitalism shall be forever banished from the earth.

The pertinence of this Manifesto in today's world is a sad testament to the continuance of the destructive nature of our economic and social system and to the accuracy of its analysis.

—EDITORS



# Letters

## Lennon no better than Lenin as a spokesperson for real socialism?

Dear Sirs,

I wondered what inspired the SPC to adopt the title *Imagine* instead of “socialist” as a prefix or suffix, as, for, example *The Socialist Standard*, *The World Socialist Review*, etc. I never considered John Lennon a socialist. To me a socialist is one who has no dichotomy between his thought and action. So why should we be eager to project a hero’s image on him by hiring his word? We are not hero worshippers. The working class does not require any hero for its emancipation. I have bitter experiences with people like John Lennon, Bob Dillon, Herbert Marcus, Rezis Debre, Franz Fenon, and similar personalities in our own country. They were all opportunists. Where are those people now? They never undertook the day-to-day strain of socialist organization, education, and propaganda within the working class. They went on selling their wares in the market. Like

capitalists publishers who take advantage of Marx’s writings, not from consideration of a socialist cause, but from profit motives, they never tried to come out of the ghetto of capitalism. Hiring anything from them will automatically give a wrong signal to the working class. Taking any other name implies the ignorance that the working class cannot be attracted to socialism directly. To lay false bait to the working class only signifies ignorance and prejudice that the working class cannot understand and achieve socialism themselves. Last, but not least, “An end which requires unjustified means is not a justifiable end” (—Karl Marx)

—ASOK CHAKRABARTI, INDIA

*There is much to agree with in your letter, the most salient being that emancipation from capitalism will be the work of the working class itself and that we will require no leaders to show us the way. The title Imagine was selected by democratic means by the whole membership of the SPC from a large number of proposals, most of which did include the word “Socialist”. You will note that beside the title we have clearly placed the words, “Official Journal of the Socialist Party of Canada”. While many of the protest singers wrote against war and the social ills of their time, as far as we are aware, none of them professed to be socialist, certainly not as we understand the term. This should not mean that we should not listen to, appreciate, or even use their words in the right context. Marx’s works are replete with quotations from non-socialists and are used both to juxtapose and to support his positions. As for selling their wares in the market place, it should be noted that, from the very beginning, capitalism was as virulent at eliminating alternative forms of employment for the labourer as it was in promoting itself. Thus, all workers in a capitalist system must sell their wares, labour power, to the capitalist. The title Imagine takes its inspiration from*

*the words of Lennon’s song and also is a reminder of our stand that socialism has never been tried and has no living, concrete examples and, at the present time, can only be imagined. Perhaps printing the words of the song would be appropriate at this point to reflect on their meaning:*

*Imagine there’s no heaven  
It’s easy if you try  
No hell below us  
Above us only sky  
Imagine all the people  
Living for today*

*Imagine there’s no countries  
It isn’t hard to do  
Nothing to kill or die for  
And no religion too  
Imagine all the people  
Living life in peace*

*Imagine no possessions  
I wonder if you can  
No need for greed or hunger  
A brotherhood of man  
Imagine all the people  
Sharing all the world*

*You may say I’m a dreamer  
But I’m not the only one  
I hope some day you’ll join us  
And the world will be as one*

*We couldn’t have said it better ourselves!*

—EDITORS

**We welcome correspondence from all our readers — you can write us by post or e-mail at the address shown at the left.**

**Letters which are selected for publication in *Imagine* may be edited for length.**

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<http://www.worldsocialism.org/canada/>

The Socialist Party of Canada provides educational material and forums to explain capitalism and socialism, and works to promote working class understanding of socialism. Although primarily active in Canada, the Party sends information to people around the world.

The Socialist Party of Canada was founded in 1905. It is a companion party in an international organization of socialist parties known as the World Socialist Movement, whose Object and Declaration of Principles can be found elsewhere in this issue.

# US–British military aggression in Iraq and the privatization of everything

The US–British war with Iraq is nothing new in terms of US–UK foreign policy. For fifty years, the United States and Great Britain have used military aggression against militarily weaker third world nations like Korea, Vietnam, Panama, and Argentina. None of these conflicts were ever over the threatened sovereignty of the United States or Britain—just their economic logic.

Like these countries, the Muslim way of life in large parts of Africa, the Middle East and Asia frustrates the economic aspirations of capitalists in America and Britain. Despite world opinion against this war, Bush and Blair's lackey-like, laissez-faire globalization stumbles irresponsibly towards Iraq's devastation under their distorted logic of capitalist accumulation.

Like the US and Britain's laissez-faire approach to "Thinking Globally"—including murdering nations when deemed advantageous—this logic is likewise bullying its way into numerous Canadian provinces, such as Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario, slashing provincial utilities while simultaneously axing public services.

Conservative-led governments in these provinces are the local chapters of this US–British expansion of corporate greed, echoing such sycophantic mantras as Gordon Campbell's "New Era of Prosperity" which rationalize massive tax cuts for the rich through undermining healthcare, education, and social services for the labouring population.

Global privatization is nothing more than these Right-wing loonies' ideal of turning publicly owned assets into profit making markets for the ever-grasping hands of their political whips, the capitalist class. Their paring back of what little advances workers have gained through reforms since World War II arises in ever-rising user fees; gross deregulation of sound mining,

fishing, and forest practices; and systematic dismantling of hard-earned labour rights—proof positive that reforms under capitalism repeatedly fail to free workers from the fetter of international capital.

These capitalist-minded provincial Rightists, instead of using "weapons of mass destruction" to get their way, are using draconian legislation to kick-start their own version of *economic terrorism* on Canadian workers nation-wide.

Their moves to privatize provincially-owned hydropower, insurance, parks, liquor distribution, and water is their brainchild to spurring sluggish local markets while choking nationalized cash-flow to already under-funded public services like hospitals and schools. Their brand of legislated terrorism and union bashing threatens to roll back public reforms decades while simultaneously lending perverse merit in telling workers to *tighten their belts* to pay for all-too-cash-strapped public services.

Like the decision process of the Iraq war, decisions on all public utility closures in Canada continue behind closed doors. Insidiously, under Canada's North American Free Trade Agreement with the United States, such changes when they involve the US will be irreversible.

Let's remember this about Bush and Blair's Globalization:

**WHEREVER THE "INVISIBLE HAND" OF THE MARKET TRAVELS, THE IRON FIST OF SUBJUGATION FOLLOWS...**

Our solution:

Whether private or state capitalism: No compromise, no reform. Let us unite to rid ourselves of subjugation worldwide by transforming capitalism into an economic democracy for all.

— ADAPTED FROM AN ORIGINAL LEAFLET  
BY J. AMES, A. O'DAY, & C. EKDAHL

## The Socialist Party of Canada

### Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of society as a whole.

### Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Canada holds:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into an agent of emancipation and the overthrow of plutocratic privilege.
7. That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interest of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
8. The Socialist Party of Canada, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to support these principles to the end that a termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

# In Ontario

## Poverty and food deprivation still here despite “robust economy”

### Crisis in Education

Ever since the present provincial government came to power in 1995, they have mounted an attack on public services with a view to privatizing them to allow the people they represent, the capitalist class, to cash in on the billions of dollars at stake. In education, they first appointed a high school dropout as Minister of Education. That dovetailed nicely with the appointment of a car dealership owner as Minister of Transportation, and a person of wealth as Minister of Social Services, who promptly lectured the poor on how to wisely spend their welfare cheques that he had just cut by 20%—e.g., bargain with the supermarket manager on the price of cans of tuna! Not surprisingly, none of the above was the least interested in developing public services.

Education in Ontario is run by school boards of elected officials representing districts, like legislative bodies, and funds used to be raised by taking a portion of the property taxes which could be raised by the boards as needs arose and the electorate permitted. The government took the fundraising capability out of the hands of the boards, scooped the money into their own coffers to help pay for massive tax cuts, mainly to the rich and a tax credit for private school users amounting to \$300 million, and then funded the boards directly with about \$2 billion less than previously. The result was the expected cuts in program, maintenance, capital spending, materials, and personnel. The Toronto Board, for example, was recognized as a leader in providing social programs such as beefed up special education services, second language help for the city's burgeoning immigrant population, parenting, inner-city help, swimming instruction, adult education, outdoor education, *etc.* After slashing or eliminating such programs for years,

and then legislated to bring in a balanced budget, the Toronto, Ottawa, and Hamilton boards refused to cut any further, while many other boards did so under duress, writing letters of complaint before complying. The three recalcitrant boards were promptly taken over by the government, the elected trustees suspended and prevented from carrying out those duties for which they were elected, a provincial auditor appointed to slash and burn, and another government appointee ran the boards as a virtual dictator. The resulting outcry brought

**Ontario Minister of Social  
Services to the province's  
poor: Why don't you try  
haggling with the  
supermarket manager  
on the price of tinned fish?**

the public versus private debate to the forefront. Although the private capitalists would examine each part of the system to reduce costs and maximize profits and we would see costly “frills” such as music, physical education, and learning about nature eliminated (or provided for an extra charge as in Alberta), the proponents of public education would do well to consider that both systems are subject to the laws of capitalism. Services under either one are provided only on a monetary basis, not a needs basis, as is everything where profit is the end result. Having worked for public boards for most of my working life, I know what a struggle it is just to

maintain necessary programs, never mind expand them or introduce new ones. For example, The Toronto Board recently had to cut all-day kindergarten, a program designed to give disadvantaged kids a head start, in order to save \$500 000. In addition the employee–employer relationship of antagonism is little different from that of the private sector with work-to-rules and strikes to improve wages and benefits and avoid staff cuts being common occurrences. Until the system is based on needs and operated directly by and for the people involved, we cannot expect this situation to improve and, very likely, it will continue to deteriorate.

### And the beat goes on...

As new statistics showed poverty and food deprivation growing across Canada, even in times of a “robust economy”, the forces of capitalism raised their ugly heel to tread once again on the most needy and vulnerable in our society. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives reported in their publication, *The Monitor* (November 2002) that the top 50% of Canadians hold 94.4% of our wealth, leaving just 5.6% to the other half, and the richest 10% held 53% while the poorest 10% held a negative 4%! The December 2002/January 2003 edition of the same journal reported that food bank use has doubled in the last decade, a time that included unprecedented wealth creation. The Canadian Food Bank Association reported, also in that journal, that 750 000 people, about the population of our capital city, now use this service every month. A recent report in the *Toronto Star* (26 March 2003) prepared by Ontario Campaign 2000, part of the national coalition seeking to hold parliament to its 1989 pledge to end child poverty by the year

**see ONTARIO, page 8**



# Obscene and heard

## Voices in a capitalist world

### On War

"He rules by fear because he knows there is no underlying support. Support for Saddam, including within his military organization, will collapse after the first whiff of gunpowder."  
—Richard Perle, Defence Policy Board chair on the invasion to bring democracy to Iraq (*Toronto Star*, 30 March 2003)

"Take away the deaths from helicopter crashes, or bumping into each other in the air... just what have the fatalities been? ...The war is going pretty well and pretty humanely."  
—David Frum, neo-con author and sometime presidential speechwriter (*Toronto Star*, 30 March 2003)

Referring to the damaged Iraqi infrastructure from the first Gulf War, such as water pumping and treatment plants which released an epidemic of water-borne diseases like cholera, typhoid and diarrhea, Richard Cheney, then-Secretary of Defence: "We had significant impact on Iraqi society that we wished we had not had to do. Nevertheless, every target was perfectly legitimate. If I had to do it all over again, I would do exactly the same thing." (*Toronto Star*, 10 February 2003)

Then-General Colin Powell, commenting on the number of Iraqis killed in the first Gulf War, estimated to be between 200 000 and 300 000 civilians and soldiers: "It's not really a number I'm terribly interested in." (*Toronto Star*, 3 March 2003)

"I was very much in favour of the American action in Afghanistan. I think it was necessary and I thought, on the whole, pretty well done."  
—author Salman Rushdie (*Toronto Star*, 9 February 2003)

Defence contractors were eager to get to war to showcase their new equipment, such as the 9000-kilo MOAB (Massive Ordnance Air Burst). "Well, it's very efficient," said George Friedman. "Let's say you've got a large concentration of Republican Guard units. Instead of having to do repeated bombing sorties, you can take out a battalion, 500 to 600 troops, with one bomb." (*Toronto Star*, 3 March 2003)

### On economy and War

Steve Forbes, editor-in-chief, *Forbes Magazine*, commenting on the impending invasion of Iraq: "Until this thing is over we are going to have the economic version of suspended animation." And on the aftermath: "We will then see value in the stock market." (*Toronto Star*, 10 February 2003)

"Incredibly, Sherry Cooper, the chief economist for BMO Nesbitt Burns, thinks war on Iraq 'would be just great' because it would be good for the stock market, and Thomas D'Aquino, CEO of the Canadian Council of Chief Executives, thinks the war would be good for the Canadian oil industry. Apparently they feel this is the price we should pay to boost the market and the economy. How callous. These people have no moral compass and we Canadians are no better than the warmongers in Washington if we echo George Bush's policies of greed and self-interest." —letter to the editor (*Toronto Star*, 4 January 2003)

"Of all the possible courses of action, brutally invading and occupying Iraq with massive military force, which will inevitably be followed by disastrous long-term consequences such as disease from lack of clean water, is just not a humanitarian way to proceed. It is the right way to proceed, though, if the goal is to gain economic control of another country's resources."

—letter to the editor (*Toronto Star*, March 2003)

### On the Economy

After collecting a \$20 million bonus for the three-week negotiation to merge Chase Manhattan Corporation and J.P. Morgan & Co., William Harrison: "These bonuses are compensation as a round of applause by boardrooms filled with stuffed animals." (*Toronto Star*, 25 August 2002)

Commenting on the federal handout of \$383 million to the metal mining industry in 2000/2001, Joan Kuyek of *Mining Watch*: "The richest vein of gold the Canadian mining industry has ever tapped was the one they discovered in the tax-payer's arm." (*The Monitor*, journal of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, February 2003)

A Treasury official commenting on the revelation that corporate and individual tax write-offs for entertaining would mean a loss of \$0.5 billion to treasury coffers: "Overall the rules represent a balance between fairness and simplicity." (*Toronto Star*, 19 January 2003)

### On Poverty

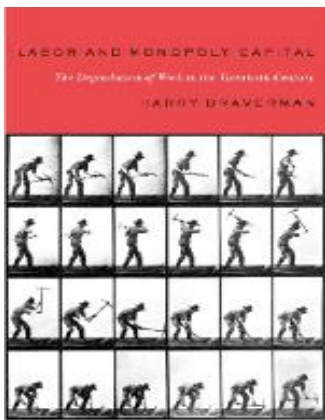
A 32-year-old mother of three, commenting on a new \$500 million condo to accommodate wealthy Toronto skiers in the resort town of Collingwood: "As far as I'm concerned, they're from another world. All they worry about is if it's cold enough for the ski resorts to make snow, while I worry about being able to afford to keep my children warm." (*Toronto Star*, 4 January 2003)

Toronto mayor Mel Lastman, commenting on the dawn raid to oust squatters from an unused lot in the

see **CAPITALISTS**, page 7

# Book review

## “Machinofacture” and the growth of monopoly capitalism



*Labour and Monopoly Capital, the Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* by Harry Braverman, published by Monthly Review Press, 1974. (A 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary edition was also published.)

The introduction reveals the author as a time-served tradesman working extensively in shipyards and railways and later turning to socialist writing and editing. Also in the introduction, to tweak the socialist reader's interest, Braverman writes on the Soviet Union, "Whatever view one takes of Soviet industrialization, one cannot consciously interpret its history, even in its earliest, most revolutionary period, as an attempt to organize the labour process in any way fundamentally different from those of capitalism." Braverman has produced a readable, erudite book that takes Marxist principles and brings them up to the three-quarter mark of the twentieth century.

The thesis of the book, stated in the subtitle, examines the factors contributing to the appalling atomization of work into fractional, repetitive processes in the sole interest of profitability and, in so doing, exposes the myth of the modern, skilled, well-educated and well-paid worker. Braverman details how the degradation of labour was achieved through the division of labour, the scientific/

technical revolution, and scientific management.

From the earliest days of capitalism, the capitalist took on the role of management through ownership of the means of production, by gathering craftsmen under his roof, and by reorganizing and transforming assembly trades and industries such as iron smelting and sugar refining. He also realized the infinite capacity of humans to adapt to new methods of production that could continually enlarge productive capacities, surplus value, and capital. This mastery over the process, Braverman notes, allowed the capitalist to systematically eliminate alternate forms of livelihood for the labourer and force him to sell his only commodity: labour power. In addition, once in control, the capitalist took the knowledge of the craftsman and returned it piecemeal, dividing the skills into small, repetitive sections, mostly capable of being performed by cheap, unskilled labour.

Braverman documents the growth of monopoly capitalism that produced, by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, huge companies such as Dupont, Standard Oil, General Motors and Sears Roebuck, which became the models that dominated the economic landscape. Society was being transformed into a huge market place, greatly expanding cities, transportation systems, infrastructure and, above all, productive capacity. These large agglomerations of capital demanded new non-productive fields such as accounting, sales, advertising, and scientific management. Pioneered by Frederick Winslow Taylor and Charles Babbage and later continued by Frank Gilbreth, scientific management is described by Braverman as "the study of work on behalf of those who manage

it, rather than for those who perform it."

It culminated in the infamous time and motion studies of Gilbreth that classified all the possible motions of the worker at his machine and assigned a time to each, thus illustrating how capitalists viewed human labour in abstract and machine terms. To Babbage, the machine was a masterpiece of control: "One great advantage that we may derive from machinery is the check which it affords against the inattention, the idleness or the dishonesty of human agents."

The third factor in the degradation of work was the scientific/technical revolution. Whereas the first industrial revolution was largely a mechanical one, driven by the steam engine in particular, the second revolution harnessed science, the last and most important social property, to the capitalist mode of production. Machinofacture, writes Braverman, took the instruments of labour from the workers' hands and placed them in the grip of mechanization, thus reducing the worker to a mere machine part and bringing to a close over a million years of human labour in which the worker created complex structures and recreated himself. Innovations such as numerical control cards and later silicone chips and electronic circuitry meant fewer parts, fewer steps, and less knowledge by each generation of labourers, reducing training time for machinists by a ratio of 12:1, from four years to four months. Thus, Braverman points out, machinery was not born as a servant to humanity but as an instrument of those to whom capital accumulation gives ownership of the productive process and controlled, not by the producer, but by the owners and representatives of capital.

see *DEGRADATION*, page 8

# A just war

## Religion's legitimization of armed conflict

Many people have opposed the latest capitalist conflict, the war in Iraq. Among them are many religious groups such as the Anglican Church of Canada. To highlight just how ridiculous their position is and to give further credence to our opposition to all religion, we should listen to Archbishop Michael Peers: "The church has supported wars in the past, including World War II, but the impending war in Iraq fails to meet any of the principles set by the church in the time of St. Augustine to define a 'just' war." (*Toronto Star*, 22 February 2003). Apparently, St. Augustine developed these principles that are supposed to still guide us on when to go to war and are as follows:

1. A just war can only be waged as a last resort.
2. A war is only just if it is waged by a legitimate authority.
3. A just war can only be waged to redress a wrong suffered.
4. A war is only just if it is fought with a reasonable chance of success.
5. A war is only just if its goal is to re-establish peace. Moreover, the peace established as a result of the war must be an improvement over the circumstances that would have prevailed had the war not been waged.
6. A war is only just if the violence used is proportional to the harm suffered.

7. Non-combatants are never permissible targets of war. Their deaths are justified only if they are unavoidable victims of a deliberate attack on a military target.

So far, we have been able to determine neither what terms such as "legitimate authority", "a wrong suffered", "a reasonable chance of success", and "an improvement over circumstances" actually mean, nor how to figure out the proportion of "violence used" to "harm suffered" or what proportion is satisfactory. We now understand why the likes of George Bush and Tony Blair have become devoutly religious. St. Augustine has given them the green light to wage war against anybody, anywhere in the world, at any time with any pretext. It also explains a lot about their rhetoric to attempt to justify their war to the world community.

—EDITORS

# Capitalists speak

*continued from page 5*

shadow of the Toronto skyscrapers: "Somebody was going to get sick or hurt or worse... and that liability could have hurt Home Depot [the owners of the property] a lot." (*Toronto Star*, 25 September 2002)

## On the Environment

"Global warming is only a theoretical problem dreamed up by scientists and environmentalists bent on having fun." —Stephen Harper, leader of the opposition Alliance party, a neo-con and pro-business group (*Toronto Star*, 21 September 2002)

## On the War against Terrorism

"Blaming terrorism on poverty is a mistake because it weakens the global war on terrorists. India's view is that when you are fighting a war against terrorism, one should not weaken the cause by trying to get into the root causes of terrorism." —India's external affairs minister, Yashwant Sinha (*Toronto Star*, 21 September 2002)

—EDITORS

## Interested in learning more about socialism?

The following members of the Socialist Party of Canada  
have volunteered themselves as contacts.

John Ayers, (905) 377-8190, jpayers@sympatico.ca  
John Thompson, kajeme@telus.net  
William Johnson, bill\_j@hotmail.com

We also invite you to write us for a free package of introductory literature. Drop  
us a line at the usual address:

**The Socialist Party of Canada**  
Box 4280  
Victoria, BC V8X 3X8  
e-mail: spc@iname.com



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# The degradation of work in our time

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*continued from page 6*

Finally, Braverman records how this process of degradation was applied to the burgeoning numbers of socially unnecessary, non-productive workers in the offices. The same principles of division of labour, scientific management, and technology were applied equally to white collar workers thus shackling these workers to their machines just as surely as is the case for the factory worker. The attention to detail in the interests of higher productivity in factory and office outlined carefully by the author is both astounding and egregious.

In the foreword, Paul Sweezy nicely sums up the reader's outrage when he writes,

The sad, horrible, heart-breaking way the vast majority of my fellow countrymen and women, as well as their counterparts in most of the rest of the world, are obliged to spend the rest of their lives is seared into my consciousness in an excruciating and unforgettable way. And

when I think of all the talent and energy which daily go into devising ways and means of making their torment worse, all in the name of efficiency and productivity but really for the greater glory of the great god, Capital, my wonder at humanity's ability to create such a monstrous system is surpassed only by my amazement at its willingness to tolerate the continuance of an arrangement so obviously destructive of the well-being and happiness of human beings. If the same effort, or only half of it, were devoted to making work the joyous and creative activity it can be, what a wonderful world this could be.

Braverman may not be a socialist by the World Socialist Movement definition, but he has produced a highly readable indictment of the capitalist mode of production and its treatment of labour, bringing a Marxist examination up to more modern times. The events of the

last twenty-five years—the increased use of neo-liberal trade practices and treaties, the further globalization of capital, the drawing of public services into private capitalists' hands, the continued degradation of work, especially as production shifts to the Third World, all serve to validate Marx's exposition of the system for what it is—a system created for the benefit of the privileged few at the expense of the exploited masses.

—J. AYERS

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## In Ontario

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*continued from page 4*

2000, stated that Ontario was home to 390 000 children defined as poor, a 41% increase in the last decade.

Against this backdrop of dismal statistics, squatters who had built a shanty town within spitting distance of Toronto's gleaming multi-billion dollar skyscrapers were evicted by a dawn raid when the owners of the property, ironically named Home Depot, ordered security guards and bulldozers in. The squatters were escorted out without belongings while a police presence kept the peace—obviously not that of the homeless! Toronto mayor Mel Lastman capped this effort when he told the media, "Somebody was going to get sick or hurt or worse, and the liability could have hurt Home Depot greatly." The insanity of it all is that we have plenty of empty houses and buildings and plenty of homeless people living on the streets or in temporary arrangements, 6000 on any given night. As always under a system based on profit, unless you can pay, you can't have even the basic human needs like food and shelter. Only control of resources, production and distribution of wealth, by and for the people, and free access to all one needs can truly and finally solve problems like these.

—J. AYERS

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## Obituary

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### George Jenkins, 1920–2003

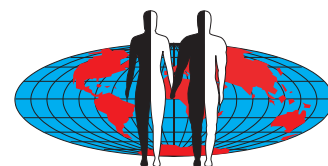
Born in Wilkie, Saskatchewan in 1920, George Jenkins spent the first part of his life on our dad's farm near Lloydminster, Saskatchewan. Our dad was a CCFer and George canvassed for that party at that time. His time spent in the army was the catalyst that made George a socialist. The family moved to BC in 1946 where he became a struggling artist. After a short marriage, he lived alone on Darwin Avenue, Victoria, BC. It was during these years that I visited my brother George often, discussing socialism. This is how I became a socialist. George had great insight into the human condition and promoted socialism for many years.

Because of this and our age difference (fifteen years) he was my mentor. George was subsequently married to Ethel (Rachel) for 27 years until the time of his passing. These years were spent on Lodge Avenue in Victoria where he enjoyed greater artistic success. The monthly socialist meetings were held at the Jenkins' house for many years. Towards the end of his life, due to arthritis and Parkinson's disease, George needed a walker to mobilize but his mind remained clear. He had a good sense of humour. I miss him as a brother, a socialist, and a friend, as I am sure most who knew him will.

—RON JENKINS

# IMAGINE

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## Capitalism works (for the capitalists)

When socialists argue their case for a better world, they often elicit the response that while socialism may be a good idea, it has never existed and we don't know whether it would be successful or not, but at least we know capitalism works. I couldn't agree more. In fact, capitalism has worked beyond the wildest dreams of the capitalist class. As a system set up to create wealth through the exploitation of the labour of the masses and then concentrate that immense capital in the hands of a tiny minority of owners of production, it has done remarkably well. Today we see corporations that straddle the globe, wealthier than many countries, individuals with so much accumulated capital that mind-boggling statements can be trotted out, such as the top 10 billionaires having a combined income greater than that of the poorest forty-eight countries [1].

But how well can such a system work for the majority? In the rich countries of the world, most workers don't starve and can afford houses, cars, holidays, and the latest electronic equipment. But even here, if we scratch the surface, some alarming statistics are produced—e.g., 37 million unemployed, 100 million (including 31 million Americans) live below the poverty line [2]. In Canada, over 700 000 people, equivalent to the population of our capital city, Ottawa, use food banks on a regular basis, 300 000 in Ontario alone; 3 million Canadians live in “food insecure” households; more than 1 million children live in poverty with its attend-

ant lack of adequate diet and life opportunities; with the increase in non-standard, temporary, part-time, insecure employment and the decrease in unionized, full-time, full-benefit jobs, almost a quarter of Canadian workers earn less than \$10 an hour, virtually guaranteeing poverty [3]. A recent study using 2001 census figures [4] reported that in Toronto, while the top 10% of earners grossed \$261 042, the lowest 10% had to be content with almost 30 times less—\$9 571 per annum. The richest 50% of Canadians own 94.4% of the total wealth, leaving just 5.4% for the poorest 50%. One has to wonder how well the system works for them or, as “flexible” work forces, cut-backs in health, education, and social services become an every-day reality, what the future may hold for the rest of the working class.

If the above figures still leave any doubt in anyone's mind for whom the current system works, a look at world statistics reveals a spectacular and tragic failure to work in the interests of all. For example, 1.3 billion struggle to exist on less than \$1 per day, 3 billion on less than \$2 and 2 billion have no access to electricity [1]; 50 000 people die each day due to poor shelter, poor water supply or poor sanitation; globally, 1 in 5 people do not expect to live beyond 40 years and in the poorest countries, three quarters of the people will not see 50 years [1] and life expectancy has dropped in 33 countries since 1990 [2]. A recent report by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization noted that the number of chroni-

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cally hungry people in the world rose to 842 million in the year 2000 and is growing by 5 million annually.

In an article titled, “Children of the Dump”, the *Cobourg Star* (31 October 2003) described the situation of the poor in Guatemala City. Of 8 million inhabitants, at least one quarter live within the walls of the huge city dump and another quarter live in communities surrounding it. They survive by rummaging through the garbage in search of recyclables and other items to be sold or traded. Apart from the appalling health risks, the dump is very unstable to work on, which necessitates the use of lighter children to do most of the work. This is a scenario that is enacted in many large cities of the southern hemisphere.

If we didn't have the productive powers or the wealth to correct this awful situation, it might be somewhat excusable but, in addition to our aforementioned billionaires, the years 2000 and 2001 saw a 25% increase in the billionaires club and while the richest 20%

see *COMMODITIZATION*, page 9

# Obscene and heard

## Voices in a capitalist world

The Americans, British, and Australians invaded Iraq to disarm a dangerous dictator developing weapons of mass destruction, capable of striking anywhere in the world in forty-five minutes, right? No, neither the inspectors before the war nor the coalition efforts after the war seem to have located any. Then, it was to get those responsible for the 9/11 disaster. No, despite 70% of a misinformed American public believing this to be the case, Saddam Hussein was not involved in that particular attack, according to all rational observers. Then it must have been to fight terrorism. No again, unless we count the war as being the catalyst for attracting terrorists to Iraq to fight the American occupation of a Muslim country after the war. Then it must have been to rid the world of a terrible dictator and establish good old American democ-

racy. Right, so let's listen to what that democracy sounds like.

L. Paul Brenner, civil administrator of Iraq, on free elections for the Iraqi people: "I'm not opposed to it, but I want to do it in a way that takes care of our concerns. Elections that are held too early can be destructive. It's got to be done very carefully. In a post-war situation like this, if you start holding the elections, the people who are rejectionists tend to win. It's often the best organized who win, and the best-organized right now are the former Baathists and, to some extent, the Islamists." (*Toronto Star*, 3 July 2003) Perhaps we should wait until an American-friendly party is the best organized to ensure the correct results!

Max Boot, neo-conservative analyst at the Council on Foreign Relations: "The notion that you can't export democracy through the barrel of a gun is simply wrong. We did it in Germany, Japan, and elsewhere." (*Toronto Star*, 11 May 2003)

Director of the BBC Greg Dyke, on the lack of impartiality of the US media: "Personally, I was shocked while in the United States by how unquestioning the broadcast news media was during the war. If Iraq proved anything, it was that the BBC cannot afford to mix patriotism and journalism. This is happening in the United States and, if it continues, will undermine the credibility of the US electronic news media. We are genuinely shocked when we discover that the largest radio group in the United States was using its airwaves to organize pro-war rallies." (*Toronto Star*, 27 April 2003)

General John Abizaid, new head of US Central Command in Iraq, commenting on soldiers voicing their frustrations on CNN regarding long terms of service

and their criticisms of top American officials including Bush and Rumsfeld: "None of us who wear this uniform are free to say anything disparaging about the Secretary of Defense or the President of the United States. We are not free to do that. It's our professional code." (*Toronto Star*, 17 July 2003). Apparently free to die for freedom but not free to exercise it!

Matt Drudge, commenting on the White House campaign to discredit journalist Jeffrey Koffman, who gave voice to those disgruntled servicemen: "The White House press office is under new management and has become slightly more aggressive about contacting reporters." (*Toronto Star*, 19 July 2003). No freedom for reporters, either!

Bahith Sattar, biology teacher, tribal leader, and mayoral candidate, commenting on the appointment of mayors by American command: "They [Americans] give us a general. First of all an Iraqi general? They lost the last three wars! They're not even good generals. And they know nothing about running a city." (*Toronto Star*, 29 July 2003)

War correspondent Christiane Amanpour, on how CNN was intimidated into acquiescence of the White House war policy by the Bush administration and the Fox News Network: "I think the press was muzzled and I think the press self-muzzled. I'm sorry to say, but certainly television and perhaps, to a certain extent, my station, was intimidated by the administration and its foot soldiers at Fox News. And it did, in fact, put a climate of fear and self-censorship, in my view, in terms of the kind of broadcast work we did." (*Toronto Star*, 16 September 2003)

Tariq Hassan-Gordon, program manager of the Toronto-based Canadian

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The Socialist Party of Canada provides educational material and forums to explain capitalism and socialism, and works to promote working class understanding of socialism. Although primarily active in Canada, the Party sends information to people around the world.

The Socialist Party of Canada was founded in 1905. It is a companion party in an international organization of socialist parties known as the World Socialist Movement, whose Object and Declaration of Principles can be found elsewhere in this issue.



Journalists for Free Expression, commenting on the beating received by a Japanese journalist at the hands of American troops for daring to film the aftermath of a US raid on a private residence in Baghdad: "There have been a lot of examples of journalists being mistreated by American forces and the situation is made worse because the post-Hussein Iraq is not yet a typical democratic process that we would expect in democratic countries. The dangers faced by independent journalists in Iraq are especially high in this situation undoubtedly affects the quality of journalism coming out of the country." (*Toronto Star*, 2 August 2003).

Explaining the seizure of editorial control of the only TV station in Mosul, Iraq, US Army Major-General David Petraeus: "We have every right as an occupying power to stop the broadcast of something that will incite violence. Yes, what we are looking at is censorship but you can censor something that is intended to inflame passions." (*Toronto Star*, 20 May 2003)

George W. Bush, during his Middle Eastern tour: "We must not allow a few people, a few killers, a few terrorists, to destroy the dreams and hopes of the many." (*Toronto Star*, 4 June 2003). No word yet on who he was talking about!

Charles Knight, national security analyst at the Commonwealth Institute, Cambridge, Massachusetts: "Is there democracy outside of four square blocks in Kabul? I don't think so. We now have the least democratic regime in our history and we're going to try to spread it elsewhere? I have great skepticism." (*Toronto Star*, 11 May 2003).

### On justification of one's point of view

The American administration's aggressive stance on the international scene could possibly bring retaliation, even with nuclear weapons. Not to worry! According to Thomas K. Jones, Deputy Undersecretary of Defense in the Reagan administration, "If there are

enough shovels to go around everybody's going to make it." (*Toronto Star*, 11 May 2003). I feel reassured!

Tony Blair justifying the push to globalization: "There is a risk, seen very clearly in parts of the European left, that we end up defining ourselves in economic terms by anti-globalization, and in foreign policy terms by anti-Americanism. Both are cul-de-sacs." (*Toronto Star*, 12 July 2003)

Justifying the administration's lying to the American public about the reasons for the invasion of Iraq, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz: "Stop and think, if in 2001 or in 2000 or in 1999, we had gone to war in Afghanistan to deal with Osama bin Laden and we had tried to say it's because he's planning to kill 3000 people in New York, people would have said, 'You don't have any proof of that.' I think the lesson of September 11 is that you can't wait until proof after the fact." (*Toronto Star*, 28 July 2003). Stunning logic!

Donald Rumsfeld, US Defense Secretary, when asked why soldiers stood around while looters stripped Baghdad's Museum of Antiquities: "It's an awful lot to ask of young men and women whose lives are at risk, to ask them to go into an area and protect everything in that area it would be nice to protect." (*Toronto Star*, 27 April 2003). Right, let's just stay with the Oil Ministry then.

George Bush talking about the need to protect America from outside threat: "There's no telling how many wars it will take to secure freedom in the homeland." (*Toronto Star*, 7 September 2003)

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, when asked what he thought about the need to ask Congress for a further \$87 billion to continue the "peace" in Iraq and the fact that the war helped turn a \$230 billion surplus into a \$525 bil-

see **OBSCENE**, page 12

## The Socialist Party of Canada

### Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of society as a whole.

### Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Canada holds:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into an agent of emancipation and the overthrow of plutocratic privilege.
7. That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interest of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
8. The Socialist Party of Canada, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to support these principles to the end that a termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

# In Ontario

## How capitalism handled the great crises of 2003

Ontario experienced a series of crises in 2003 which impacted on the economy and provided a lesson in true nature of the capitalist mode of production. Firstly, Canada refused to become a member of the 'coalition of the willing' and join the US in its quest to secure the oilfields of Iraq for its own purposes. The corporate-funded right-wing think tanks and their political arm, the Alliance Party of Canada (recently amalgamated with the Conservative Party), raised a cacophonous chorus of objection and trotted out their poster boy, American ambassador to Canada Paul Cellucci. He proceeded, in a most undiplomatic fashion, to lecture the Canadian government on several occasions on national television about standing by friends in time of need, how the US would be there for Canada, and how the Canadian action could have a detrimental effect on cross-border trade upon which the Canadian economy relies so much. The ambassador neglected to mention how his government not only opposed several Canadian international initiatives such as the moratorium on land mines or the Kyoto agreement, but actively campaigned against them, or how the US has sought to punish Canada frequently under the "Free" Trade Agreement of North America by slapping huge import duties on Canadian goods such as softwood lumber whenever their capitalists felt economically challenged. Some friends! No need to worry, no capitalists have passed up any chances to make money by not trading with us and the sky hasn't fallen in yet.

In the spring, a family returned to Toronto from a visit to Hong Kong and brought the virus known as Sudden Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) with them. A new virus, it was not immediately recognized and those infected were left side by side with

other patients or sent home into the community, causing a hospital emergency that closed hospitals, put medical staff at grave risk, killed 44 people, made another 375 very sick, and quarantined thousands. While the medical community was praised for its selfless devotion to duty, it was clearly playing against a stacked deck. In an effort to privatize health delivery, both federal and provincial governments have chronically underfunded the health system, which left the detection and care of infectious diseases vulnerable and inadequate. Between 1995 and 1999, 25,000 hospital positions were cut by the provincial government. These people are not sitting around doing nothing. They help to make the system work and when they are not there it doesn't function efficiently. The Toronto Medical Officer of Health complained that the ability of the public health system, of hospitals, and of governments to respond to such crises had been severely reduced by cutting health care to the bone. Even though it was his own government that had fired thousands of nurses and paid out millions in severance pay, only to have to rehire them, the Minister of Health, Tony Clement, expressed shock at finding an army of nurses, 50% of the total, who worked at part-time jobs, often at more than one hospital. But it was only when the World Health Organization placed a travel advisory on Toronto that we heard from our political and business leaders. The media were full of stories and figures about how much the economy would suffer and, of course, trotted out the old rubric of how many jobs would be lost, mostly in the tourism and hospitality sector, and finally estimated losses at around \$2 billion. The WHO was painted as the villain, sustained extensive lobbying from the business interests and caved in by lifting the ban after just eight days. This left Toronto with a huge image prob-

lem which would be sure to affect the chink of cash registers in the future. What to do? A huge SARS benefit concert was arranged to show the world that Toronto was "open for business". (How that phrase makes me cringe after eight years of the Tories' "Common Sense Revolution"!)

That the organizers chose the Rolling Stones to headline the concert and save the city is a cause of some amusement after the group had been vilified for their drugs, sex, and rock and roll attitude by the city's leaders when they first arrived here thirty years ago. To be sure there was plenty of hype, newspaper headlines screamed, "We Rocked—450,000 Party puts Toronto back on the World Map" (*Toronto Star*). A commentator at the event shouted excitedly, "We're open for business—come here and spend money!" Not too many people were fooled by this thinly veiled attempt to boost business while ignoring the real issues of the health sector. Letters to the editor at the *Toronto Star* were typical: "[The SARS concert] was intended to benefit this provincial government's main constituency, the boys of the business community, who have been hit in the wallet by the outbreak." And "...all the lack of funding and the tremendous costs to the health care system (\$1 billion) will not be changed one iota by the Stones concert. They're coming to boost the tourism and hospitality industry." Surely in a sane society, one not based on money and profit, we would have said right from the beginning, "Don't come here; we have a problem and we want to fix it, not risk spreading it around the world." Surely in a sane society we would have precautions for recognizing and reacting to infectious diseases in place, and those who were no longer required in the tourist industry could contribute in other areas until required again rather than losing their means of living.

August saw the great North American blackout which cut power to over 50 million people in the North Eastern US and Ontario. Two things are notable. First, it seems that once again privatization of services was a strong factor. The transmission system is described as old and in need of serious money to meet today's demands. When this money must come from profits, it will be the absolute minimum and thus infrastructure usually lags behind needs. When it comes from public funds (taxes) this also comes from profits, with the same results. The initial enquiries fingered a private energy company in Ohio, FirstEnergy, whose lines began to go down early in

registers down, capitalism was suspended. Many people simply pitched in with directing traffic at intersections, helping the workers at the few gas stations with backup generators, and bus drivers extending their shifts and waiving the fares to provide needed service, all working for free. Meanwhile comments from the general population included, "What a beautiful night we had last night. Our family gathered together and had dinner outside. With the TV and computers down the kids were also with us. We all played a board game with the help of candles and a million stars. Maybe if we are lucky the power will still be out tonight." And, "Despite the amount of holidays and

In September a tainted meat scandal came to light when a meat processing plant in the province was found to have been using dead and sick animals. This came after mad cow disease had been discovered in Alberta, impacting economically on the Canadian meat industry. This brought a flurry of photo-ops for politicians to be seen eating at barbecues and declaring meat safe to eat (read: buy). On further investigation it was obvious that the inspection system was quite inadequate for the task at hand, allowing at least one unscrupulous plant to take advantage and put the public's health at risk. In its zeal to present a balanced budget and hand more tax cuts back to the already-wealthy, the provincial government had, as in so many other areas, slashed funding for the inspection of meat, reducing 100 inspectors to just ten full-time contract employees, and relied on part time inspectors or downloading to the municipalities to fill in the void. Once again, the insanity of running an economic and social system solely to accumulate capital is quite obvious. In the case of mad cow disease we should have been saying, "Yes, we have a problem, and all beef deliveries will be stopped until we are certain all is safe." Why is our industry still using feed made from animals anyway after the recent experience in Britain? Obviously, that type of feed is cheaper and inflates profits, public health be damned! In the case of Ontario's tainted meat, if there were no money involved, it simply wouldn't be worth cheating the system. There would be no gain. All of these catastrophes could have been avoided or minimized if sane people in a sane system were charged with looking after the public good. In capitalism, those charged with this task, no matter whether it is businessmen, politicians, or workers with the appropriate skills, no matter whether they are working in a for-profit enterprise or a non-profit enterprise, can only operate in an insane system that must attend to the economic consequences before the human consequences.

—J. AYERS

“ While the medical community was praised for its selfless devotion to duty during the SARS crisis, it was clearly playing against a stacked deck. ”

the day, but the company neglected to warn other suppliers so the problem could be isolated. Apparently the company had been judged responsible for a recent blackout in the New Jersey area and thus were required by law to forego their next price increase, a situation to be avoided at all costs. FirstEnergy is also reported to be a company that neglects infrastructure in the interests of higher profits (no surprise there, what company doesn't!) and drew a scathing remark from senator Edward Markey (D-Mass) while addressing a Congressional Committee: "From what I can tell, FirstEnergy should not have a licence to drive a car let alone nuclear power plants." The second notable factor is what happened when the energy supply died and, with the cash

vacations that we are given from work, it takes a massive shut-down for us to just plain do nothing. I spent the night talking to my family face-to-face, and I had nowhere else to be." And, "Not wanting to be alone in a dark and empty house, I knocked on the door of my neighbours to see if they would mind if I hung out with them. They decided to come over to my house with all kinds of steaks and barbecue-type foods that would have been wasted in their fridge. We had a great, relaxing gathering out on my deck, and an opportunity for the first time I remember to see a beautiful sky full of stars over Toronto." (*Toronto Star*) Just a small glimpse of what life could be like without the madhouse chase to earn a living and consume at all costs!



# Book review

## Was there ever a time in which work was satisfying and pleasurable?

*The Tyranny of Work: Alienation and the Labour Process* by Paul Rinehart, Harcourt Brace & Company, Canada, 1996.

The purpose of the book is to reveal the manner in which the nature and organization of work have adversely affected the Canadian people since pre-industrial times. Rinehart begins his examination of work under capitalism by identifying it as a social problem. Work plays such a central role in our lives and yet has brought continuing protests from workers to protect themselves from industrial excesses such as child labour, long hours, low pay and injurious working conditions. These struggles, especially spectacular ones such as the Winnipeg General Strike, were viewed by the authorities as a problem of workers' responses to work, never of the nature of work itself. Rinehart asks, "What has happened to make an important, necessary, and potentially pleasurable social activity which is capable of satisfying both material and psychological human needs into a source of strife, resentment, and boredom?"

At the root of the problem is the alienation of the worker—i.e., estrangement of the worker from the product; alienation from decisions regarding the work; organizational estrangement from the meaning and purpose of work; estrangement from the expression of human qualities such as conceptualization and planning; and deterioration of human relationships, both between workers and between workers and capitalists, through the creation of dominant and subordinate positions in the workplace. The sources of alienation, Rinehart writes, are the fact that the means of production is in the hands of a small minority, thus excluding the majority from decision making and so creating an exploitive relationship; the markets in land, labour-power, and commodities being under the domain

of prices and profits and taking preference over human conditions; and the division of labour, creating specialization and boring, mindless, repetitive jobs. This picture is contrasted with pre-industrial work that was varied, communal, and family-related, and often indistinguishable from play, sociability and leisure. Rinehart rejects technology itself as a cause of alienation, rightly recognizing that the primary causes are to be found in the social relations of production: "Under capitalism, the development and selection of technology are guided not only by the goals of productivity and profitability, but also by employers' and managers' determination to minimize workers' control over the labour process."

Rinehart describes the rise of industrial capitalism in Canada, which arrived late but followed familiar developmental patterns as the mercantile class gained hegemony and capital wealth from land and lucrative terms of credit, that bankrupted farmers and put land out of the reach of immigrants, supplying a ready workforce for capitalist enterprises, and thus paving the way for the establishment of the factory system in Montreal, Toronto, and Hamilton in the late nineteenth century. The small, self-sufficient villages were transformed by the replacement of craftsmen by machines, the movement of production to large centers and the conscription of women and children to cheapen labour. Discipline was applied, of course, to force the workers to labour ever harder to produce greater amounts of surplus value. Rinehart cites Paul Mantou, in *The Industrial Revolution in the Eighteenth Century*: "Hard and fast rules replaced the freedom of the small workshops. Work started, meals were eaten and work stopped at fixed hours, notified by the ringing of a bell. Within the factory each had his allotted place and

his strictly defined and invariable duty. Everyone had to work steadily and without stopping, under the vigilant eye of a foreman who secured obedience by means of fines or dismissals, and sometimes by more brutal forms of coercion."

Rinehart recounts the workers reactions to the factory system pointing out that besides the known reported protest movements such as the formation of trade unions and their actions, more subtle and less reported forms were prevalent, as detailed in the 1889 Royal Commission, such as spontaneous walk-outs, work stoppages, restrictions of output, industrial sabotage, and absenteeism. The author writes, "Wherever it has arisen, industrial capitalism and its work requirements have clashed with the pre-industrial cultural values and practices." The Fourth Convention of the Canadian Labour Union, 1876, even passed a resolution calling for co-operative ownership of industry in their search for an egalitarian alternative to capitalism. Strikes and strife have continued up to the present day and have, in fact, been expanded from the factory to include clerical and public service workers. Rinehart correctly analyses in his notes to this section (#158) that far from removing the especially antagonistic practices of the globalization of capital and liberalization of trade that has occurred in the last quarter century, so-called worker-friendly parties such as the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party have simply continued the same trends. This, of course, fits in with the socialist view that all parties are capitalist in nature and every four years compete among themselves to run the capitalist system for the capitalists.

Rinehart looks extensively at the gradual change from manufacture to white-collar, knowledge-based, service and technology sectors.

Like Harry Braverman in *Monopoly Capital* (see *Imagine* 2(1)), he concludes that these jobs have been subjected, like the factory jobs, to the capitalist mode of production and thus degraded, and that the emphasis on training and education far outstrips its need. For example, in 1986, 41% of undergraduates, 62% with masters degrees, and 35% with PhDs held jobs that did not require a university education. Far from needing the workers to pull up their socks to be even more competitive, Rinehart writes, "Canada's problem is not a shortage of good workers, but a lack of good jobs." Socialists would interject that Canada's problem is the employment system itself. Rinehart notes the rationalization of white-collar jobs, such as sales clerks, who have become mere movers of material as small stores with product-knowledgeable clerks give way to the big box stores staffed with minimum wage assistants. Even the skilled professional, technological and scientific workers are subject to strict control and limited to working on projects that will turn a profit. For example, scientists employed by a large multinational firm were told, after developing a technique of making fertilizer that could substantially increase rice production, to concentrate instead on lawn fertilizer. Obviously, the buying power of the American public to have green lawns far outweighed the needs of impoverished Third World farmers.

While it is true that some professionals move up the corporate ladder, closer to the levers of control, they generally leave their skills behind them: "The engineer who, at forty, can still use a slide rule or logarithmic table, and make a true drawing, is a failure."

The public sector, which doubled as a percentage of the Canadian workforce to 20% during 1941–70, while viewed as plodding unimaginative and inefficient, in reality, follows the private organizations, using the same values and practices. This is hardly surprising, Rinehart points out, because there is widespread interchange of top personnel between the two systems and close personal ties among top executives

moving in the same business and social circles. Rinehart confirms the socialist view of government as the legislative arm of capitalism: "Owners and executives of big business are active in both the state and private systems, and the alliance between the two sectors is dominated by the interests of corporate capitalism."

Rinehart argues that although labour force developments are complex, the position taken by some post-industrialist theorists that science and technology are transforming the social relations of production and class structure is largely a false position considering the increase in minimum-skill jobs and the continuation of the class struggle through increased union action of white collar workers in recent decades: "Given that employers determine the implementations and purposes of technology its overall effect, in conjunction with modes of work rationalization, is not the creation of knowledge workers but the displacement of workers, the removal of their skills, and the transfer of their discretion and control over the labour process to management."

In his section on blue-collar employment, Rinehart notes the factors that continue to alienate the worker and challenges the popular media stereotype of the affluent trade union member who could care less about the nature, skill, or control of labour. In reality, the increase in real family incomes for workers slowed in the seventies, stagnated in the eighties, and declined in the nineties. In London, Ontario, for example, in 1992, a family of four would have needed \$36338 to meet basic needs, while the average male worker earned \$31696, necessitating two incomes to achieve this end. The jobless rate varied between 5.7% and 11.3% in those decades, but Rinehart points out that if discouraged (no longer seeking employment) workers were counted, it would have been as high as 15.7% in 1991 and double that if underemployed were counted. The division and degradation of labour has continued its profit-oriented course and

extended into more occupations such as printing, mining, trucking, longshoremen, and railroading. Rinehart asks us to consider the following job description from a typical blue-collar worker at a food processing plant: "Basically, I stand there all day and slash the necks of chickens. You make one slash up on the skin of the neck and then you cut around the base of the neck so the next person beside you can crop it...The chickens go in front of you on the line and you do every other chicken or whatever. And you stand there for eight hours in one spot and do it." Rinehart describes many more jobs like this and some who enjoy their work such as a toolmaker and a piano tuner—notably, those with some control, variety, and creativity.

New technology is increasingly used to set up surveillance of workers by monitoring the speed and output of machinery, the movement of trucks and the routes of meter readers—in short, not to free the worker but to tie him more securely to his task. Discipline is an ever-present component of the drive to increase productivity. "The capitalist workplace is characterized by relations of subordination and domination, and manual workers occupy the subordinate positions," notes Rinehart. In the service industry, the fastest-growing job sector, jobs are characterized by low pay, low security, and little training, and are occupied mainly by women and teenagers. The physical environment frequently exposes the worker to unsafe and harmful conditions resulting in 4000 injuries per day and 1000 deaths annually (1968–1978), and a myriad of life-long diseases, including cancer, emphysema, black lung, and asbestosis: "General statistics on the magnitude of workplace health and safety problems and recent events in industries such as meat packing and mining tragically reveal that the interests of employers and employees are far from identical on this matter." All of these factors have ensured a continuation of the class war manifested by strikes, legal and wildcat; quota restrictions; gold bricking; slowdowns and

working to rule; indifference; sabotage; and production games to belittle management and put the workers in control. Rinehart sums up, "In their pursuit of profits, employers and managers subjugate workers, speed up and routinize work, implement labour-replacing machinery and keep wages as low as possible—actions inviting resentment and resistance from workers. By contrast, involvement in the production of useful goods and services creates among workers a concern for the quality of their output and their work performance."

In his concluding chapter, Rinehart examines solutions to alienation. He notes that, contrary to former systems, the capitalist system has created a sharp division between work and leisure. A full and creative leisure life might decrease the effects of alienation but, unfortunately, leisure is a small percentage of total time for the worker and with the modern pace and expectations of business and close surveillance via such devices as cell phones and laptop computers, it is essentially much less than previously experienced for many sectors of the economy. Automation could be a source of freeing the worker from menial tasks—e.g., in 1980, it took ten to twenty man-hours to produce one ton of steel; in 1990, just five man hours were required for the same task. In 1980, a metal shop did \$5 million in business with fourteen skilled men; in 1990, the same shop did \$25 million in business with thirteen skilled men. But as Rinehart observes, "Unfortunately, the liberatory potential of technology is limited, since its development and implementation are controlled and its purpose defined by persons and institutions with vast resources of capital and power." Indeed, in the greatest

period of automation, from the 1960s to the present, we have seen virtually no reduction in the hours and little advance in real wages of workers. Since 1948, US workers' productivity has doubled—i.e., they could be working half the time for the same standard of living, but, in fact, they were working 163 hours more per annum, on average, by 1987!

In this section Rinehart also examines initiatives by management to ameliorate the lot of the worker. Various human relations and quality of life programmes, such as participatory management, job redesign (despecialization and rotation), and Japanese lean production, all supposedly to create more interesting jobs. For example, Rinehart

“ Since 1948, workers' productivity has doubled. We could be working half the time for the same standard of living, but in fact by 1987 we were working 163 hours more each year. ”

describes the Uddvalla Volvo plant in Sweden where assembly lines were foregone in favour of assembly islands where four people assembled the whole car. Although the plant eventually matched traditional methods and was more flexible and therefore more conducive to model changes, it was the first plant closed when Volvo sales declined in 1993. Rinehart found that all these schemes were designed not to humanize work, but to intensify labour, lessen labour costs, meet production emergencies, or to turn resistant workers and adversarial unions into willing collaborators with management and its policies: "...this retreat from the precepts of Fordism and Taylorism is undertaken by management for management's purpose."

Rinehart then moves to workers' control of production and cites the examples of the Paris Commune (1871), the Russian revolutions (1905 and 1917), Italian and German factory occupations (1918–1920), Spain (1936), Japan (1946), and Poland (1981). In Spain, Rinehart writes, there were masses of urban and rural labourers who had transformed social and economic conditions. Seventeen hundred villages and three million people were involved in collective forms of agriculture and workers' committees controlled entire towns. Barcelona and its province, Catalan, were a large industrial collective sporting signs that read "*incaultado*", or placed under workers' control. Rinehart cites Noam Chomsky's observation that the move-

ment in Spain was largely a spontaneous one without a revolutionary vanguard. Eventually these enterprises were forced to a standstill because credit and necessary supplies were withheld, not by Franco, but by the Republican forces. These

examples and many more modern ones, such as the vast Basque Mondragon cooperative prove that workers can and do run production of goods successfully, without any help from the capitalists. Rinehart observes that the market (the capitalist mode of production) is the barrier to worker control and sees the only genuine solution to alienation as a total restructuring of the workplace, the economy, and the state, and the establishment of a collective mode of production, a democratically planned economy, and worker-managed enterprises.

Finally, in the last sentence, Rinehart echoes socialist sentiments: "Only when working people take up the struggle on a massive basis will the full

see TYRANNY, page 12



# The commoditization of food

*continued from page 1*

consume 80% of all goods and services, the poorest 20% make do with a meager 1%. In other words, we have the resources to redress the wrongs, perhaps even the will, but we have a system that must concentrate capital in an enterprise to make it competitive and giving wealth away would make corporate survival in a competitive capitalist world impossible.

In spite of the above picture, you would think that any system would at least be successful at providing the absolute human necessity of food to everyone. All societies in history have been able to produce or find adequate food; otherwise they would not have existed. Of course, there were famines and people died of starvation, but these were mostly due to natural causes such as weather or pests. Food shortages were usually shared among the whole community. Today, in contrast, we have millions dying annually of food deprivation and we continually hear about desperate situations such as the 15 million people who faced starvation in Southern Africa at the start of 2003. Yet we are quite capable of, and generally do, produce enough food to feed everybody. It is estimated that 80% of countries where people are starving export food. Wealthy people in those countries have no problem buying food. In the affluent countries, we pay farmers billions of dollars *not* to produce food and frequently hoard commodities like grain to create an artificial shortage to keep the price and profits up. In other words, we have starvation amid plenty. The cause is not shortage of food, but an abundance of poverty. This is a recent phenomenon in human history but fits right in with the property rights and capital accumulation of our economic system.

Even the rich countries don't entirely escape this problem. Apart from the deficient diets of those living below the poverty line or those earning minimum wage, we have the large

numbers resorting to food banks, as noted above, a figure which keeps on growing and stretching the volunteers' ability to meet rising demand. In Greater Toronto, food bank use has increased 40% since 1995 to 160 000 people; over 50 000 of them are children [5].

What is going on that has created this great disconnect between producer and consumer? At the beginning of capitalism, food was used as a coercive instrument in persuading the dislocated peasants to move from the countryside to the developing factory towns. They were housed in tiny row houses with a ten foot by eight foot concrete backyard. As well as being efficient housing from the capitalists' point of view, it prevented these skilled market gardeners from producing their own food. Hence they were forced to show up at the factory on a daily basis whereas, with a plot of land, they might have thumbed their noses at the employers. Food then became a commodity and became subject to the same market forces as all other widgets—*i.e.*, mechanization, productivity, labour and product degradation, ever-greater rates of exploitation of labour.

What we are experiencing today is simply the natural extension of this continual process. Just as skilled, independent artisans and tradesmen were put out of business by the factory system, so too are independent farmers being pushed off their land to make way for industrial agriculture. In the US, small farms have declined from 6.8 million in 1928 to 1.6 million today [6]; the six founding nations of Europe's common agricultural policy had 22 million farmers in 1957, but just 7 million today; Canada lost three-quarters of its farmers between 1941 and 1996; China has an estimated 400 million endangered farmers [7]; in Missouri, hog production has doubled but the number

of farmers cut in half; the introduction of massive hog farms in Huron county, Ontario has brought the pig population to 594 250 (174.8 per square kilometer) while the human population is 58 000 (17.1 per square kilometer). The waste run-off from these operations has resulted in *E. coli* contamination of up to 100 times safe levels in surrounding streams and the permanent closure of beaches on Lake Huron.

The natural trend of capitalism to concentrate capital in ever-larger enterprises has brought food decisions into the realm of the corporate boardroom. The bottom line is about profit maximization and has little to do with dietary, environmental or sustainable farming considerations. Industrial farming is characterized by large-scale factory operations, confinement and concentration of animals, lagoon storage of animal wastes which frequently leak into local ground water systems, spreading or spraying of manure on open fields, monoculture and high chemical use in crops, genetically modified foods, irradiation, food alteration and dilution, and vast transportation systems to send products thousands of kilometres to huge supermarket chains. In addition, these large enterprises have been able, through bribery tactics such as large political contributions, spending huge amounts on lobbying and the collusion of their partners, the state governments, to win massive concessions in the form of subsidies and favourable trade legislation. For example, the 2002 US farm bill gave \$248 billion to large farming corporations, and the richest 20% of farmers in the European Union pull in 80% of the subsidies. Total agricultural subsidies in the rich countries exceed \$300 billion per annum [7]. Small farmers can no longer compete. In Canada, since 1988, agricultural exports have tripled but net farm income has dropped 24%, farm debt has doubled, 16% have been forced off their land, and the number of inde-

pendent hog farmers has dropped 66% [6]. In recent decades, world trade agreements have liberalized trade rules allowing organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to use loan repayments to force poor countries in the Southern Hemisphere to open their markets to cheap, subsidized food from the north, closing local farms and forcing a reliance on foreign food. At the same time these rich countries have maintained their own tariffs and subsidies. In Jamaica in 1992, for example, local dairy farmers produced 25% of milk consumed in that country. World Bank liberalization policies required the elimination of tariffs on imported dairy products. Within one year, millions of dollars worth of milk had to be destroyed, hundreds of cows slaughtered and many dairy farms closed as cheap, subsidized milk powder flooded in [7]. The \$3.9 billion US subsidy to 25000 cotton farmers was greater than the entire GDP of Burkina Faso where 2 million unlucky farmers relied on cotton for a livelihood.

As is usual in the capitalist mode of production, no stone is unturned in the search for greater productivity and cost cutting to increase profits. This has resulted in some questionable but financially successful tactics. In meat production, the feeding of processed blood/bone meal and animal parts spreads viruses and diseases including mad cow disease; antibiotic use, 80% of which is for non-essential use, has resulted in an increase of new strains of resistant bacteria; force-feeding of cows of grain rations prior to slaughter to increase weight has, in some cases, resulted in *E. coli* contamination soaring to 300%; the practice of dunking chicken carcasses into fetal soups to increase market weight leads to bacterial outbreaks; advanced meat recovery techniques—scraping everything including nerves, cartilage, and ligaments—produces low grade meat for fast food outlets [8].

In another recent technological development, genetically modified

foods, genes of a plant are altered by injecting genetic material from another species into the plant to make it resistant to specific herbicides or pesticides. Producers claim it will enhance present yields to the point where we will be able to feed the hungry of the world. As noted above, however, we are quite capable of doing that with current food technology and distribution practices. Action Aid, an international development agency in its report, "Going Against the Grain" [9], says that GM foods are risky technology with no track record of alleviating hunger and may actually worsen the situation. Only 1% of GM research is aimed at poor farmers in developing countries and the report concluded, after studying nine million farmers on four continents, that "it's not the interests of poor farmers but the profits of the agro-chemical industry that have been the driving force behind the emergence of GM agriculture." The Independent Panel on GM, a newly formed group of leading international scientists, has called for a ban on GM crops in favour of sustainable agriculture after GM crop failures in India reached as high as 100%. On the Canadian prairies, Monsanto, a leader in the GM field, promised farmers using their product higher yields, little or no cross contamination, and a benign impact on the environment, but what they got was lower yields due to wider contamination, damage to wildlife support systems, and super weeds that required increased pesticide use. In addition, organic canola was wiped out by cross contamination of Monsanto's Roundup Ready GM canola, and in at least one case, the company took the organic farmer to court for using their product without permission even though his seed supplier could not guarantee the supply to be free from contamination.[10]. In a study covering three states by US scientists, it was found that modified sunflowers spread their properties to the wild variety and that transgenes could transform weeds into superweeds—i.e., those which are not controllable [11]. Paul Brown, environmental correspondent for *The Guard-*

*ian*, reported that a British study in eight counties and nine other sites showed that seeds sown in these GM trials had been contaminated with antibiotic genes undetected by government inspectors who simply accepted the word of the offending company, Adventis, and that animal or human consumers could develop an immunity to common life-saving drugs [12]. The *New Internationalist* magazine confirmed this by citing an article by University of California researchers in *Nature* magazine who stated that modified DNA in GM foods can recombine in the stomach during consumption transferring the properties of the modified plants. This could render medicine ineffective. The Institute of Science in Society reported that the 550 million acres planted with GM corn, soybeans, and cotton between 1996 and 2003 increased pesticide use by fifty million pounds. A study by the University of Manitoba, commissioned by the Canadian Wheat Board stated that Monsanto's Roundup Ready wheat posed an "unacceptable risk" to the environment [14].

This all points to an industry that has developed new techniques which with time and patient research may help mankind in the future. Unfortunately, those in charge of its development and use, in the interests of making fast and huge returns on investment, have rushed products to market that are unstable, uncontrollable, exacerbate old problems and bring a host of new ones, and could be downright dangerous to consumers.

This scenario contrasts with sustainable organic farming where skills learned over centuries are applied to produce smaller units growing a variety of crops, using less soil-compacting machinery, reduced tillage, crop rotation, fallowing, mulching, recycling of organic wastes, and avoidance of chemicals. Animals roam in more natural environments eating natural foods and only use antibiotics only when necessary. It is more labour-intensive for actual food production but, as it can be practiced anywhere, it can save the huge costs and labour of transporta-

tion and building of machinery. Various studies have proven the superiority of organic farming. Jules Petty of the University of Essex, in a study of organic farming in 52 developing countries, found organic farms increased yield by an average 73%, and increases of 200–1000% have been attained. Saskatchewan farmers discovered that by substituting a variety of biological and cultural practices, they could reduce chemical inputs by 20–60% [13]; small organic farms can generate revenue of \$1902.50 per acre compared to \$21.40 for large farms [6]. Not surprisingly, this type of food production creates more nutrition, uses less chemical inputs, supports soil health, nurtures diverse wildlife and prevents water supply contamination. Organic vegetables contain more vitamins, minerals, enzymes and other nutrients than commercially grown crops. Megafarm fruits and vegetables, on the other hand, contain less nutrients than they did 50 years ago. For example, broccoli now has 62% less calcium, 33% less iron, 55% less vitamin A, and 40% less thiamin [6]. Organic turkeys, in contrast to those commercially reared, receive no antibiotics, hormones, or GM feed, and are field-grazed on pesticide-free grassland, producing birds that contain half the fat and cholesterol and have a higher protein content. One might wonder why this form of agriculture does not replace industrial farming were it not for a knowledge of the profit system.

As modern food production moves further away from markets and more to the cheaper, less regulated Southern hemisphere, better preservation techniques are required. One such technique is irradiation, where food trays are moved through chambers with six-foot thick walls and exposed to high-energy gamma rays from dripping pencils of nuclear waste products such as cobalt 60 and cesium 137. Leaking canisters pose a threat to food and workers. The big player in this process is Sure-Beam, a division of American defense contractor Titan corporation, aided and abet-

ted by the nuclear industry eager to find a market for its waste products. An “e-beam” from a particle accelerator may be used but only penetrates 1½” and no method is 100% successful in killing microbes. Irradiation ruptures numerous chemical bonds, leaving free radicals, ions, and other radiolytic byproducts dangerous to human health such as formaldehyde, octane, formic acid, butane, methyl propane, and benzene, and others found only in irradiated food. Nutrition is destroyed leaving vitamins, enzymes, healthy bacteria, and essential fatty acids seriously depleted—e.g., losses of up to 80% of vitamin A in eggs, 91% of vitamin B-6 in beef, 50% of vitamin A in carrot juice, 37% of vitamin B-1 in oats, and 30% of vitamin C in potatoes [8]. Once again, a technique that fits the convenience of large scale, profit-motivated farming corporations, but not the nutritional needs of the consumer, is put into practice without the consent of the latter.

What we have ended up with today, then, is an industry essential to human existence that has the ability to richly feed everyone on earth but, following the capitalists’ mantra, “can’t pay, can’t have”, millions experience food deprivation due to the nature of the system. Following the capitalist mode of production, the food industry has developed techniques that result in higher profits for the food giants while forcing smaller farmers out of business. The level of monopoly capitalism is illustrated by the fact that just four US companies, linked into two alliances, Cargill/Monsanto and Novartis/ADM, control 80% of the world seed market; six corporations handle 85% of the world grain trade and fifteen corporations control 85–90% of world coffee sales. Large scale monoculture techniques have resulted in a staggering loss of diversity, the bedrock of the natural biological world, to the extent that today less than 30 crops produce 80% of the world’s food supply; 75% of the genetic diversity of agricultural crops has been lost since 1900; Mexico has lost 80% of

its corn varieties since 1930, and China lost 90% of its wheat and rice varieties in 20 years [15]. These figures can only be matched by the nutrient loss in our foods that has spawned massive vitamin, mineral supplement, and drug industries. The dilution of quality, the substitution of processed, additive-rich, and sugar-rich foods has resulted in unprecedented obesity levels stimulating diet and exercise industries. I suppose from the capitalist point of view, this is good business, more opportunities to invest capital and exploit more wage earners, and as these giant capitalist enterprises move into health care, degraded food is creating more customers for them in the health system. In the US, obesity rates have tripled since 1980, two-thirds of the population are overweight and 300 000 die of obesity every year. At current rates, it is estimated that three-quarters of Britons will be obese within 15 years. Because obesity occurs among poor populations, it can be concluded that it is not a disease of affluence, but rather one of diet.

The marketing arm of capitalism has exacerbated the problem with the “supermarketization” of food sales that rely on the profitable pre-cooked meats and processed, convenience foods that contain lots of sugars. In Brazil, the share of food sales by supermarkets went from 30% to 75% in the 1990s, China went from 0 to 600 supermarkets in six years, and in Mexico, Wal-Mart commands one third of all household expenditure [15]. This process has completed the control, by a few giant corporations, of the food chain from seeds to production to chemical inputs, to sales to the consumer. It has rendered eating natural healthy foods almost impossible. If they are obtainable at all, they are often too expensive for the average consumer.

A recent radio report cited a poverty action group that bought healthy food for one month and determined the cost for a family of four to eat properly to be \$600. For that quarter of the Canadian population that earns \$10 per hour or less, this would leave a maxi-



mum of \$1000 for all other expenditures including rent, clothing, and transportation—an impossible task. With probably another quarter that is only slightly better off, perhaps half of the Canadian population is condemned to cheap, processed, and diluted fast foods for the majority of their diet. No wonder our health care system is overburdened!

The commoditization of food for the purpose of accumulating capital wealth has obviously been very successful for the investors, but continues to be a tragic disaster for mankind.

—J. AYERS

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## Obscene and heard

*continued from page 3*

lion deficit in three years: "Look, I'm not in the budget business. The president has announced a number. I work for the president. If you want to know what I think of his number, I like it." (*Toronto Star*, 14 September 2003)

Henry Ford, defending the establishment of boring, repetitive jobs on his assembly line: "The average worker, I'm sorry to say, wants a job in which he does not have to put forth much physical exertion—above all, he wants a job in which he does not have to think." (Rinehart, *The Tyranny of Work*)

Colin Powell, squirming like a stranded earthworm, returning, cap in hand, to the "irrelevant" UN to ask it to put forth a major commitment and play second fiddle to USA in "rebuilding" (pillaging) Iraq: "There are many roles to be played. And we believe every peace-loving nation in the world, every nation that would like to see a more stable Middle East, that would like to see democracy arise in that part of the world, would want to play a role. Whether one might call it dominant or not dominant, it's important for us to come together as an international community, and this is a further step." (*Toronto Star*, 14 September 2003)

### On health

Toronto Mayor, Mel Lastman, complaining in a CNN interview about the imposition of a travel advisory on Toronto by the World Health Organization, the 55-year-old body charged with guarding the world's health: "Who are

these guys anyway? I've never even heard of them."

Letter to Editor: "SARS and politics are a bad mix. SARS is clearly demonstrating that our political and economic goals far outweigh the primary goal of protecting our citizens from disease. Where were Jean Chrétien [PM] and Ernie Eves [Ontario Premier] and Mel Lastman before the WHO declared its travel advisory? Only when it became clear that the Canadian economy was about to take a serious hit did they become visible." (*Toronto Star*, 27 April 2003)

In an article in the *Toronto Star* (25 August 2003), writer Rick Westhead: "Even though it affects as many as 300 million people a year and kills one million, for decades malaria has been ignored by the pharmaceutical industry because companies make more money developing drugs to sell to affluent patients."

### On starvation

In the US congress debate over the G-7 initiative to provide debt relief to forty poor countries, legislators depicted the IMF (International Monetary Fund) as the agency responsible for that debt crisis and Representative Maxine Waters commented, "Do we have to have the IMF involved at all? Because as we have painfully discovered, the way the IMF works causes children to starve."

### On the blackout

As the power flickered back on after the great North American Blackout, the huge neon advertising billboards sucked electricity out of the faltering grid and prompted an enraged Mayor Mel Lastman to hit at the very bedrock of capitalist production—advertising—screaming, "Turn them off. They're not necessary. They're not important." Well said, Mel.

### On the environment

After a particularly smoggy period in Southern Ontario, environment minister Jim Wilson attempted to deflect blame from the real culprits, unregulated capitalist producers, onto the public: "Clearly, anything they [the public] can do to cut down their use of equipment or barbecues that produce smog would help." The Ontario Clean Air Alliance noted that the government's coal-fired generating plant, Canada's top polluter, produced 7.5 million kilograms of pollutants annually, an SUV produces 10 kg, while barbecue pollution is so trivial, it's never been quantified.

—EDITORS

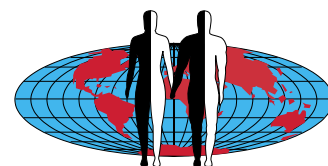
## **Tyranny** *continued from p. 8*

development of our personal and social lives become possible." Although there are many aspects of the socialist case that Rinehart does not touch upon, such as the end of states, money, wage labour, *etc.*, he is on the right track on his topic, the alienation of the worker, its consequences, and solutions.

—J. AYERS

# IMAGINE

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## The Tyranny of Copyright

### Trouble at the Fourth International

Last year, the Trotskyist online newspaper *World Socialist Web Site*, or WSWS (no relation to us and the World Socialist Movement), published a press release and an open letter to the Madrid-based magazine *Amanecer del Nuevo Siglo* accusing them of translating and reprinting WSWS articles without their permission [10,8]. The charge was compounded by the allegation that the Spanish magazine had deliberately misrepresented the source of the

articles either by attributing them to their own editorial staff and writers or by removing the byline altogether.

The WSWS staff was understandably surprised and upset at this unsanctioned reproduction, but more surprising still were the threats and capitalist-tinged language contained in their accusations. Terms such as “piracy” and “stealing” were used to describe the actions of the *Amanecer*, implying that the unauthorized copying of political literature is the equivalent attacking a ship, looting its cargo, and kidnapping or killing the people onboard. The WSWS claims its articles enjoy special status as “protected literary works”, as if to imply that copyright laws exist to prevent their articles from destruction or damage by malicious third parties.

While the SPC does not condone the *Amanecer*’s actions, it is clear from the WSWS’s reaction to this incident that their brand of politics has little in common with the Socialism we advocate. Not only is their conception of copyright and so-called “intellectual property” inconsistent with a Socialist viewpoint, it is also largely unsupported by the current legal systems of the US (whence the WSWS operates), Spain, and other countries. In short, the

### WHAT’S INSIDE

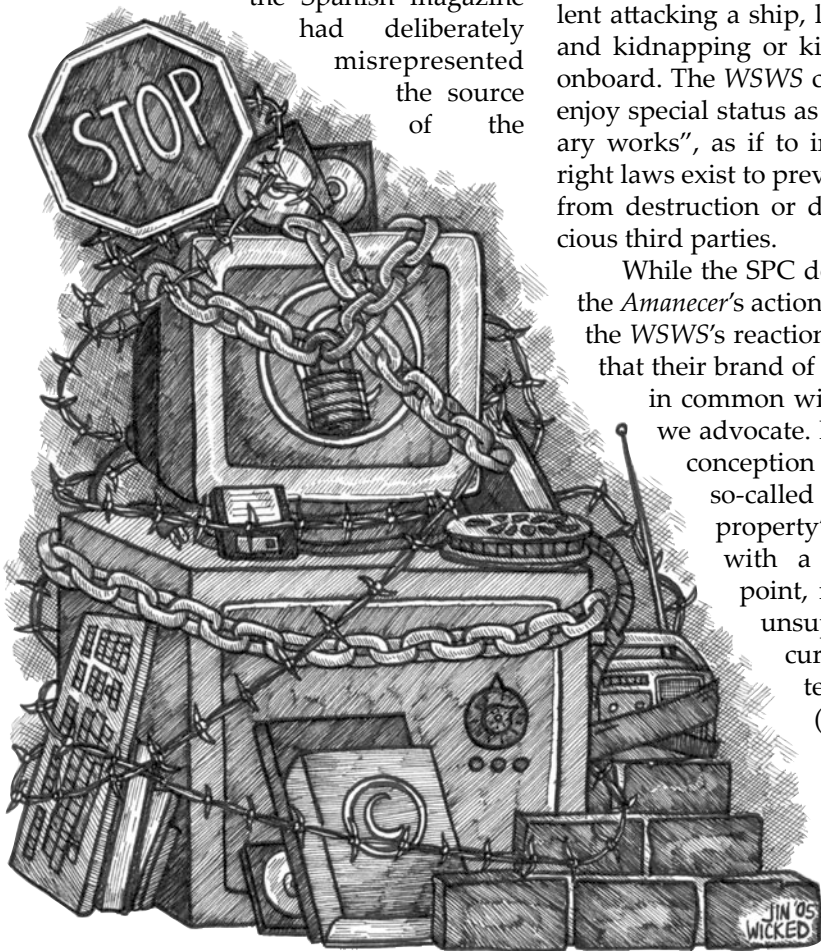
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WSWS has a far more narrowly construed and materialistic view of its “property rights” than even capitalist copyright law affords.

### The monopoly of information in nascent capitalism

Before examining this issue further, however, it is helpful to review a few basic concepts about copyright and its history in the Common Law world. Since the very invention of writing, the copying of literary works had traditionally been a painstakingly slow process performed manually by trained scribes. Almost all literature was commissioned or issued by the Church or the state, and nearly everyone outside the ruling and religious classes was illiterate. For these three reasons, the idea of placing restrictions on the reproduction and distribution of written information would have seemed ridiculous at the time. Indeed, there were countless benefits to the free flow of ideas—philosophers and mathematicians were free to borrow, critique, and expand upon

see **COPYRIGHT**, page 8





# The numbers game

## Can “social activism” really change the way society works?

**T**he World Socialist Movement (WSM) is small. It has been small since the first of the Companion Parties was founded in 1904. Socialists assert that only a vast majority of the world's population, as socialists, can create socialism. According to some, this means that our approach is wrong, because it hasn't generated the billions of socialists required to create socialism.

Before reviewing that issue, let us first review the flipside of the issue. That is, can socialism be created in any other way, or can the problems be solved any other way?

The World Socialist Movement, over the years, and socialists before us, have created a large library of literature showing that the answer to those two questions is no. There is no solution but socialism, and socialism cannot be created by a minority. So it is a choice between more of the same—wars, pov-

erty, environmental destruction—and working to get the world's working class majority to convince itself to create socialism.

The World Socialist Movement now contains about one six millionth of the world's population. If we assume that membership today is ten times what it was 100 years ago, and that rate of growth continues, we can extrapolate into the future. That extrapolation will show that socialism is therefore impossible.

But we haven't closed the door quite yet. Sluggish growth can be replaced by sufficient growth.

If today you are a reformer, perhaps a supporter of Greenpeace, consider how far you are from where Greenpeace thinks we need to be. And consider the current rate, scale, and success of reforms. We offer a sure-fire approach to getting the reforms Greenpeace and other reform groups want.

As the numbers of socialists increases towards a majority (or even a sizable minority), reforms (such as the ones sought by “social activists”) will be easier to get, because the threat to capitalism will have significantly increased.

Consider a world in which Greenpeace has 2.8 million supporters (same as today) seeking to limit the worst excesses of capitalism (same as today). Consider now that there are also 2.8 million active, conscious socialists in the world. Capitalism will not be on its knees, by any stretch of imagination, but it will notice us, and will have an obvious interest, and powerful impetus, to prevent those 2.8 million socialists from recruiting new socialists. Capital will try to convince those who are not yet socialists that capitalism can solve the problems and therefore that socialism is not needed. Capital cannot solve the problems inherent in capitalism. So the capitalists will attempt to correct the worst excesses of capital-

ism—as it does today—to appease the Greenpeacers and other reformers.

When the appeasement fails, and there are 28 million socialists, the reforms will become a steady flow. When there are 280 million socialists, the river of reforms will overflow its banks, if there are any more reforms possible at that time. When there are 2.8 billion socialists we will be only a step from ruling the world and eliminating the cause of the problems, and the supposed need for reforms.

There are not a lot of socialists. Few people have heard of the World Socialist Movement, and the media is not exactly helpful in promoting socialism. It takes a lot of time, and a lot of work to get people to convince themselves to work for socialism.

Everyone who spends time working for reforms, or donates to reform organizations, is proving by their actions that they believe that reforms are a useful route to a solution. History has shown, time and time again, that they are wrong. The reforms are always too little, too late.

Socialists want to solve the problems. Therefore, socialists want socialism, and work to build a socialist majority.

The Companion Parties of Socialism, in the World Socialist Movement, are socialist parties. They promote socialism because that is all a socialist party can promote.

If you find a “socialist” party promoting “social activism,” you will have found a non-socialist party ignoring socialism and working for reforms.

—STEVE SZALAI

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The Socialist Party of Canada provides educational material and forums to explain capitalism and socialism, and works to promote working class understanding of socialism. Although primarily active in Canada, the Party sends information to people around the world.

The Socialist Party of Canada was founded in 1905. It is a companion party in an international organization of socialist parties known as the World Socialist Movement, whose Object and Declaration of Principles can be found elsewhere in this issue.

**We welcome correspondence from all our readers — you can write us by post or e-mail at the address shown at the left.**



# Bolshevik bullshit

## What Leninists failed to learn from the Winnipeg General Strike

Ian Angus, author of *Canadian Bolsheviks* (just re-issued) and a latter-day Canadian Bolshevik himself, gave a talk in Toronto last May on “What Socialists Learned from the Winnipeg General Strike” of 1919 (the full text of which can be found at <http://www.socialisthistory.ca/Docs/History/WinnipegStrike.htm>).

In it he attacked the old Socialist Party of Canada for adopting a non-interventionist attitude towards the strike. According to him, instead of leaving the workers involved to plan and run the strike themselves, the SPC should have tried to turn it into the Bolshevik insurrection to seize power that the capitalist press of the time claimed it was.

Despite the press’s Red-scare-mongering, the Winnipeg General Strike was what it claimed to be: a strike to win collective bargaining rights with local employers. And it had not been organized by the SPC. There were a number of SPC members on the strike committee, but they were there as workers directly involved in the economic side of the class struggle alongside other workers who—the vast majority—were not socialists, and they were aware that without a majority of socialists, socialism was not on the agenda and certainly couldn’t be the outcome of the strike. Given this situation, all a socialist party could do—and what the SPC did do—was to express and organize support while continuing its policy of “education for revolution”.

This position was not to Angus’s liking. The SPC, he said, “failed to lead”:

While Socialist Party leaders played a central role in leading the Winnipeg Strike and in parallel strikes across the country, they did so as labor militants. The SPC as a party played a minimal role, and the strike wave had no political strategy. That was a critical weak-



Workers demonstrate on Main Street during the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919

ness. A general strike by its very nature is a challenge to the established order... But the leaders of the Winnipeg strike, including the socialists, failed to see the political implications of this. On the contrary, they did their utmost to confine the strike to simple questions of trade union rights and wages. They exerted every effort to avoid conflict with the government.

Given that the strike was in fact over “trade union rights and wages” this was the intelligent thing to have done. Any action to try to overthrow the government, as advocated today by arm-chair Bolsheviks like Angus, would have failed and resulted in widespread and senseless bloodshed. As it was, the government decided to use its superior power to make a stand in Winnipeg to try to stop the post-war labor unrest. They arrested eight persons who they considered to be the strike’s organiz-

ers and put them on trial for seditious conspiracy, thus effectively breaking the strike. All eight, five of whom were SPC members, were convicted and sent to prison.

According to Angus, “most of the leaders of the 1919 strike wave were not social democrats or liberals—they were revolutionary socialists. And the experience did not lead them to the CCF—it led them to build a new revolutionary party, the Communist Party of Canada.”

This is not true, as far as the Winnipeg General Strike is concerned. None of the eight singled out by the government and sent to prison joined the Communist Party. Nearly all of them tried to become Labor politicians and some of them succeeded—A. A. Heaps, for instance, becoming a federal MP for the CCF. Two later returned to

*continued on page 12*

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# In Ontario

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## The more governments change, the more they stay the same

### Can You Spot The Difference?

In the last two years we have suffered through two elections in Ontario, one provincial and one federal. I say suffered because it is an exercise in futility for the voter to sort out the different parties by listening to their politicians and platforms. The Socialist Party of Canada/World Socialist Movement stands against all other political parties and even has a clause in its Declaration of Principles to that effect, and with good reason! We hold that all other parties are capitalist in that they openly support that system, or offer no alternatives to ownership of the means of production by a tiny minority, no alternative to commodity production for profit, no alternative to exploitation through wage-labour, no alternative to the class system. The confines that these political parties operate in is so narrow that meaningful alternatives are not even heard or considered, leaving little choice for voters. This is partly the result of the control of the media by capitalist interests to preclude any other real alternative. In the federal election, the Green Party ran in every single riding but was excluded from the national televised debate, as was Ralph Nader and many others in the US presidential election. Any thinking outside these narrow parameters is labelled extreme and dismissed. Given that, it is not surprising that Canadian voters have simply exchanged the two major parties for decades like changing underwear.

In the Ontario election, the Conservative Party, which had been in power for two terms on the basis of their neo-liberal agenda of mean and lean government, were exchanged for the Liberal party. The electorate simply became fed up with cutbacks in services and the party was exposed as fraudulent when, during the campaign, it was revealed that their much-touted balanced budget was going to show a

\$5.6 billion deficit. The new “alternative” immediately moved in the same direction as its predecessor by passing Bill 8, which provides “accountability” in the health care system. That means, among other things, that the Minister of Health will receive more control to cancel services and to amend collective bargaining agreements to implement wage, benefit, and staff cuts, and disallow job security provisions. New Premier McGuinty commented, “It’s about slowing down growth... that is our objective, to begin to better manage our health care expenditures...” (*Toronto Star*, 24 April 2004). This was followed by news that the promised tuition freeze for beleaguered students would now not apply in all cases—news not much different than that of McGuinty’s political predecessors.

**T**his sameness in administering capitalism, of course, illustrates that every government is constrained by the economic system we currently have in place, the capitalist system, where the largest chunk of the value created by the worker must go to the capitalist to pay for production costs and profit. The other small fraction of the wealth produced, the cost of wages, represents the cost of maintenance of workers and their families to keep the supply of workers coming. Such constraints also mean that workers cannot be expected to fork out for the cost of social programs, education, hospitals, and so on, without impacting on their maintenance. The money for these necessary programs must come out of profits—profits indirectly cloaked as apparent taxes on workers’ wages over and above workers’ living costs, and out of which necessary societal benefits are in part paid. In other words, the employers pay the taxes, not the workers. If taxes go up, wages must rise to account for it. If taxes go down, wages will correspondingly be

depressed. That’s why the greatest cry for tax reduction comes from corporate-funded think tanks like the Fraser and C.D. Howe Institutes and the capitalist media. They have attempted to hoodwink workers into believing that if they had lower taxes they would have more disposable income, but in reality lower taxes mean higher profits and lower real wages.

We have a third party in Canada, the New Democratic Party, with which the word “socialist” is sometimes linked. During the federal campaign, I walked into my local NDP office and stated I was a socialist looking for a party to vote for, and could anyone recommend a suitable one? The surprised campaign manager replied that they were known as social democrats now, but they would like to re-nationalize Ontario’s electricity industry. “Is that the same as capitalism?” I enquired, tongue in cheek. He nodded sheepishly and grinned. Not much difference there, then. Likewise, the Communist Party platform contained the ideas of giving students a better deal with tuition fees, striving to give everyone the right to have a job (presumably so more of us could be exploited and increase the capital accumulation for the capitalists) and tax the corporations more. Sounds just like the NDP platform. They go on to say that although these reforms will not lead to socialism, they could very well lead to larger reforms. That they say nothing about ending the system of exploitation, the class system, or ownership of the means of production, puts them in the same category as all the other capitalist parties.

**I**n the federal election, the Liberals posed as the defenders of social programs even though their leader, Paul Martin, as finance minister in the 1990s was the person responsible for slashing funding to them in unprecedented measures. During the campaign, the



current Liberal finance minister, Ralph Goodale, accused Tory leader Stephen Harper of proposing deep tax cuts that would lead to deeper cuts in government programs. It is a matter of record, however, that it was Martin who made the deepest cuts with his deficit-slaying-on-the-backs-of -the-poor budget of 1996 that reduced federal spending from 16% to 12% of Canada's GDP, a level not seen since the 1940s before we had a public health care system (*Toronto Star*, 5 April 2004). This was highly praised by a former Tory finance minister and executive director of the right wing Fraser Institute, Michael Wilson, as exactly the cuts they had proposed. Equal praise came from the same sources when Martin refunded a \$100 billion tax give away, mainly to major corporations and rich Canadians, in 2000 when surpluses appeared from an expanding economy. This surplus would have eliminated the deficit without any program-cutting.

What it all boils down to is that there is no alternative party to the array of capitalist parties masquerading as a wide choice, other than the Socialist Party of Canada, the only one with just one objective—the establishment of socialism. Isn't it time that YOU, the reader, joined and worked for a party that proposes the only system of society that would end war, poverty, starvation, exploitation, and the class system!

### And The Beat Goes On...

Many capitalists, their minions, and apologists are fond of telling us that capitalism is a system that can solve world problems such as poverty and inequality, if only given a free rein and time to spread its benefits world-wide. They use the developed nations of the West to illustrate their point of wealthy workers and endless opportunities for those willing to work hard. The fact that 250 years of capitalism has left us with approximately half the world's

population eking out a living on \$2 a day or less, almost a billion people going to bed hungry every night, and millions without access to clean water, health services or education, all in a world of plenty, doesn't seem to register. Even when we look closely at the "successful" world, we see that report after report details growing poverty, hunger and homelessness. A recent United Way report entitled "Poverty by Postal Code" shows how, among 522 identified neighbourhoods of the city of Toronto, 120 contained more than 25% of families living in poverty (a number that has doubled since 1981), 23 neighbourhoods designated super-poor (40% in poverty), and just 177 neighbourhoods with low poverty (*Toronto Star*, 5 April 5 2004).

Poverty, it seems, is moving to the suburbs where 92 of the 120 neighbourhoods are located, and it is so widespread that Royson James (*Toronto Star*, 4 April 2004) commented, "In truth, our ghetto might just be the pockets of privilege—small islands of prosperity in a city-wide span of poverty." Poverty in Toronto is becoming increasingly widespread among recent immigrants and visible minorities as jobs with a living wage and benefits are being replaced by minimum wage, short-term jobs, continuing the trend to greater inequality between rich and poor. The median household income in the poorest 10% of the neighbourhoods was \$32 900, up just 2.6% since 1980, while that of the richest 10% of areas was \$92 800, a 17.4% increase.

All this is not exactly a ringing endorsement of our system in the richest city in Canada. With every report it is becoming ever clearer that, despite the promises, resolve, and desire of our politicians, these problems cannot be resolved under a system that is specifically designed to create wealth for a few and never, no matter what reforms are gained, work in the interests of all.

—J. AYERS

## The Socialist Party of Canada

### Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of society as a whole.

### Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Canada holds:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into an agent of emancipation and the overthrow of plutocratic privilege.
7. That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interest of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
8. The Socialist Party of Canada, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to support these principles to the end that a termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

**Socialism needs your help:  
Please consider passing this issue on to a friend!**



# Death at Dieppe

## Why 900 Canadian soldiers were sacrificed for the botched raid

An event of 62 years ago would hardly come under the heading of current affairs, but with the media's near-frenzy concerning the 60th anniversary of the Normandy landings, some have pointed out there was a landing in Northern France two years before. This was the disastrous Dieppe invasion of 19 August 1942—or perhaps “fiasco” would be the appropriate description. The Germans, obviously aware of the impending raid, had their “reception committee” in place, which left 900 Canadian soldiers dead on the beach.

What makes William Burrill's article in *The Toronto Star* (9 November 2004) different from all the other articles is his contention that the BBC, to put it mildly, tipped the Germans off. According to Mr. Burrill, the *Star's* radio expert, “BBC radio broadcast details of the attack to

France via Radio Free Europe. The BBC said an attack was taking place on Dieppe by thousands of soldiers in landing craft.” One may wonder what flight of madness would cause the British to tell their intentions to the enemy.

To the British and North American capitalists, it may not have seemed so mad. According to historian Barry Broadfoot in his book *Six War Years*, a convoy of eighteen ships taking supplies to the British army in North Africa left Southampton that morning. It was imperative to the Western capitalist class that it arrive safely. Defeat in

North Africa would mean the Germans would have access to British-owned oil wells in the Middle East, thereby crippling, if not destroying, their war effort. It would also mean the German army could push through the Middle East to link up with their own troops in Russia and with the Japanese army in Burma. Could, one wonders, the tip-off have been a diversionary tactic? If not, it certainly was an enormous coincidence. What one may believe is in direct proportion to how much one

capitalist, excuse the estimated 100 000 deaths in Iraq with the lie of weapons of mass destruction—the blatant hypocrisy being that no one has more control of weapons of mass destruction than Bush himself.

Most people this writer converses with about war tend to group war-related deaths into two categories: those that are necessary for the normal prosecution of war (as if war could be considered normal); and those caused by stupidity and/or blind ambition, two

related aspects. The charge of the Light Brigade and the battle of the Little Big Horn would be two prime examples. Clive Ponting, in his excellent work, *Winston Churchill*, asserts that 30 000 died in the insane Gallipoli venture in 1915, in the honourable gentleman's attempt to further his career.

Many consider atrocities such as the Holocaust and other forms of genocide,

all of which make the mind recoil in horror, as unnecessary to war. Socialists draw no such distinctions. When one understands the case for socialism, one realizes that all wars, and therefore all war-related deaths, are unnecessary, as indeed are those deaths caused by other social ills that could be prevented by the establishment of a sane society. The companion parties of socialism have explained very clearly for a century that the working class has no stake in wars, which are caused by competing sections of the capitalist class for



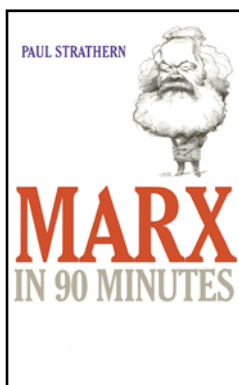
Corpses litter the beach after the disastrous 1942 raid on German-occupied Dieppe

believes in coincidence. According to Broadfoot, the Canadians were chosen because many had complained that they hadn't enlisted just to “sit around the barracks for years”. Boy! What some workers won't do for the capitalists! By sending them to death at Dieppe, they were effectively silenced, figuratively and literally.

The reason (excuse) for the raid was to capture the German's radar so British scientists could see how it worked. There is a never-ending stream of excuses to make people fight. We've all witnessed Bush, a politician and oil

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# Book review



*Marx in 90 Minutes*  
by Paul Strathern

*Philosophers in 90 Minutes* series  
Ivan R. Dee, Publisher, Chicago, 2001

ISBN 1-56663-354-0 (hardcover);  
1-56663-355-9 (paperback)

One of the most common requests from those new to socialist theory is for a short introductory text to the philosophical and economic writings of Marx himself. It's easy to see why—anyone who has casually leafed through the meaty *Das Kapital*, let alone the monstrous 50-volume *Marx/Engels Collected Works* by Progress Publishers, can easily feel overwhelmed at the sheer volume of text. For those who simply don't know where to start, Paul Strathern, author of the popular *Philosophers in 90 Minutes* series, promises to deliver a "concise, expert account of Marx's life and ideas" in this compact 90-page volume.

Instead of providing us with some brief biographical details to put Marx's work in context, however, Strathern immediately launches into various sordid details of Marx's personal life. There is no end to the vices with which the author gleefully attributes his subject: The infant Marx, we learn, was an abusive sibling who forced his sisters to eat mud-pies. In school, he was a habitual drunkard who brawled with the local gendarmerie and dodged the draft with a suspicious medical certificate. As a refugee in London, he took to stock market gambling and engaged in wanton vandalism of public property. The older Marx is described as a "grubby", dishevelled adulterer who squandered his family's meagre income on cheap cigars while he "sat sunning himself at the window in his underpants". And as if this image were not detailed enough, Strathern goes on

to describe the eruption of a boil on Marx's penis. If these facts are in any way relevant to Marx's philosophical and economic works, Strathern fails to mention it.

It's not until page 48—almost halfway through the book—that the gratuitous gossip ends and the treatment of Marxism proper begins. This leaves only about 20 pages before the appendices, which is not nearly enough to convey Marx's major ideas. Still, the author gives a more or less correct, if superficial, exposition of Marx's views on the division of labour, alienation, religion and the rise of Christianity, private property, social relations of production, monopolies, unemployment, and crises. It is questionable how useful or understandable this information is, though, given that Strathern almost completely glosses over such fundamental concepts as surplus value and the labour theory of value. In fact, he rejects outright the validity of the latter, using the opportunity to preach the distinctly non-Marxian notion that profit is a reward for taking financial risks.

Though Strathern places great emphasis on the historical context of Marx's ideas, he seems to willfully ignore this context when it suits his arguments. For example, he criticizes the reforms Marx advocated in *The Communist Manifesto* [2, p. 31–2], but fails to consider that they were made with specific reference to nascent 19th-century capitalism and were never intended to be applicable to today's global markets. He also seems at times to deliberately misinterpret Marx's use of the word "labour" as referring to manual labour only; in fact, the Marxian conception of a labourer is anyone who is compelled to sell their ability to work for wages or a salary, irrespective of the type of work performed. Perhaps the only other significant error Strathern commits is to claim that Marx predicted that capitalism would eventually self-destruct. In reality, Marx described

capitalism as going through repetitive cycles of prosperity, crisis, and stagnation, and that no crisis would ever be permanent [1, p. 373]. If capitalism were truly in imminent danger of collapse, of course, there would have been no need for Marx to advocate revolution; the proletariat could simply sit around and wait for socialism to arrive on its own.

The interested reader will be disappointed to discover that towards the end of the book, Strathern abandons Marx altogether and instead wastes space on his own theories on the nature of capitalism and socialism. The problems of capitalism, we are told, are not inherent in the system itself, but are rather the fault of a few overly greedy capitalists trying to cheat the system. Strathern furthermore drags out the tired old argument that the system can be made more humane through government intervention and nationalization. He criticizes the former USSR for taking such interventionism too far, using its failure as a state as a specious argument for the impossibility of socialism. In reality, the Bolsheviks could not have implemented socialism even if that had truly been their goal, for socialism must be a global economic system with the understanding and support of a vast majority of the world's people.

It seems clear that we cannot recommend this book as a general introduction to Marxian theory. It may hold some appeal for those who want the "National Enquirer" version of Marx, but for those who are interested in the facts that matter, the book is of very little value. Perhaps the most charitable thing that can be said about it is that it doesn't get *too* much about Marx's ideas wrong—but then again, this stems from the fact that precious few of Marx's ideas are mentioned in the first place.

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# Copyright under capitalism

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the works of their colleagues; historians were free to compile and summarize descriptions of events recorded by others; storytellers were free to retell existing tales while adding their own embellishments. In fact, many ancient texts survive to the present day only through the liberal quotations found in the critiques and summaries of contemporary authors.

This state of affairs changed drastically with the perfection of mechanized printing in the 15th century, which opened up a whole new economic sector for printers and booksellers to exploit. The increasing availability of books led to increasing literacy among the general population, which in turn led to some output of literature that was not necessarily in line with the status quo. It is not surprising, then, that one of the first known laws instituting prohibitions on copying, Britain's *Licensing Act of 1662*, was produced not to grant rights to authors but to censor works deemed objectionable by the government. The Act, whose full title is "An Act for Preventing the Frequent Abuses in Printing Seditious Treasonable and Unlicensed Books and Pamphlets and for Regulating of Printing and Printing Presses", essentially granted legal monopolies to printers who agreed to restrict the dissemination of political and religious ideas the state found unacceptable. Books and leaflets from unlicensed printers, including foreign imports, were completely outlawed.

As the book trade grew, printers and booksellers rose in economic clout, and the *Licensing Act* was superseded by the *Statute of Anne* (1710) which established the principle of "sole ownership" of a literary work. Initially this ownership, or *copyright*, rested with the author, but in order to be paid for the work the author had to assign the copyright to a publisher. The lump sum or

royalties the author earned from this sale helped support his upkeep while he produced his next work. In theory, an author could copy and sell the work himself, but because few authors had the capital necessary to purchase and operate their own printing presses, the *Statute* was clearly biased in favour of the bourgeois publishers.

With the Industrial Revolution, capitalism quickly established itself as the dominant socio-economic system in Europe, and with it came more rules and legislation designed to protect the profits of the established publishing houses. Foremost among these was the 1886 *Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works*, a treaty which harmonized the recognition of copyrights among national governments. Prior to its adoption, a book published, for instance, in London, was covered by copyright only in Britain, and could be reproduced and distributed with impunity by French and German publishers. Of greater importance to the actual *producers* of literary works was the fact that any author was theretofore free to translate and incorporate text from foreign works into his own; he did not need to seek prior permission from the author (or more likely, from the publisher, to which copyright was almost invariably assigned). In this way ideas flowed freely across national borders with the same ease they did from writer to writer in the ancient world, allowing for the rapid development and improvement of science, philosophy, and the arts.

Recognizing that maintaining this sort of freely reproducible public pool of works was important for the synthesis of new ideas, the drafters of the *Statute of Anne* and the *Berne Convention* tried to strike a balance between the short-term profit motives of publishers and the higher goal of advancing human

knowledge. They stipulated that copyright on any given work was in effect for a limited term, after which the work fell into the public domain and could be reprinted by anyone. The term specified by the *Statute* was fourteen years, renewable once if the author was still alive. The *Berne Convention* extended this to, at minimum, the lifetime of the author plus fifty years.

## The Mickey Mouse Preservation Act

In practice, however, publishers realized that some of the works they owned remained potentially profitable well after the expiry of the original copyright term, and lobbied their respective governments to extend copyright terms to ever greater lengths. For example, shortly before the copyrights on early Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, and other cartoons were due to expire, Walt Disney Co. executives led an intense and highly successful lobbying campaign to the US government. Through extensive public propaganda, direct proselytizing to legislators in secret hearings, and that form of legalized bribery known as "campaign contributions", Disney and its allies in the Motion Picture Association of America were able to secure a twenty-year extension to US copyright [5].

No longer able to maintain the pretence that copyright exists simply to benefit authors (the retroactive extension affecting only works whose creators were long dead), lobbyists and legislators seeking extension upon extension resorted to outrageous claims such as that "lack of copyright protection actually restrains dissemination of the work, since publishers and other users cannot risk investing in the work unless assured of exclusive rights" [1, pp. 134–5; 2, pp. 117–18]. Of course, this claim is patently false in the majority of cases; witness the continued sales and profitability of classic public-domain



works from Dickens and Shakespeare all the way back to Homer and Æsop. The true issue is not the profitability of older works, but the right to concentrate that profit in the hands of a single publisher. The total sales of Mickey Mouse cartoons would be the same whether they were sold by one large company or a dozen different small ones. As the owner of the reproduction rights to the cartoons, however, Disney is strongly motivated to do whatever it can to preserve its income from its legal monopoly.

### Information under fire in the Digital Age

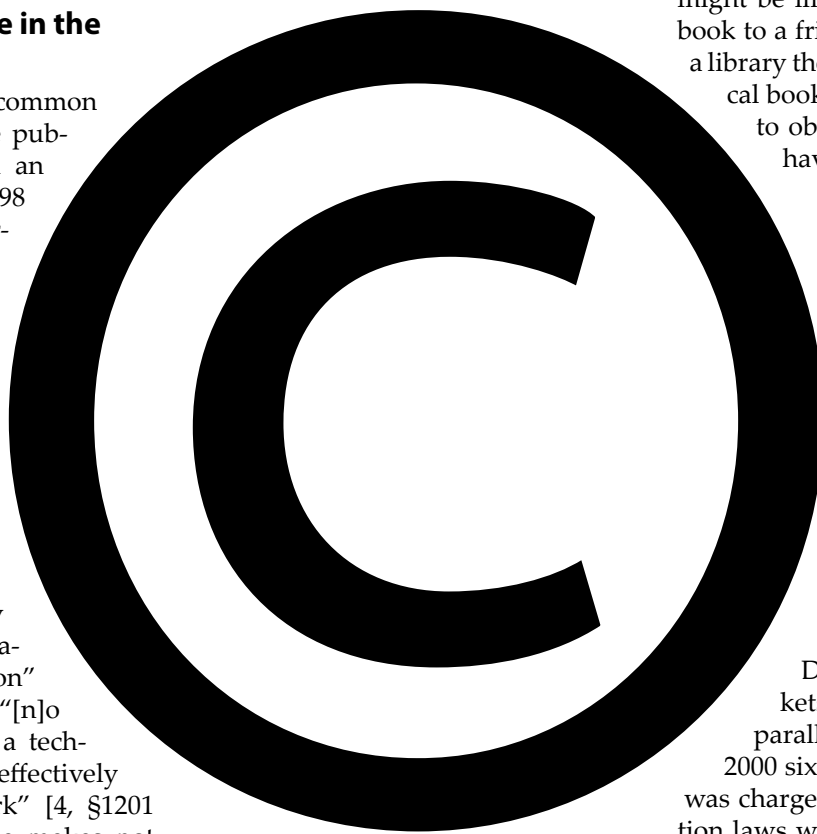
The freedom of the common people to access and use published materials suffered an even greater blow in 1998 with the passing in America of the *Digital Millennium Copyright Act*, or *DMCA*, most of the provisions of which were later adopted by the EU and 43 other countries as the *WIPO Copyright Treaty*. This radical new legislation essentially gives publishers of electronic media *carte blanche* to rewrite the law as they see fit. The key is the infamous “anti-circumvention” clause, which states that “[n]o person shall circumvent a technological measure that effectively controls access to a work” [4, §1201 ¶ (a); 9, §11]. This clause makes not only copying a book a crime, but even merely *reading* it or otherwise using it in any manner not approved by the publisher.

To recount one infamous example, in the late 1990s the software company Adobe Systems developed a computer file format for storing and distributing books electronically, along with a program which could access these files. Along with each “e-book” in Adobe’s format was stored a series of computer-readable rules specifying which actions were and were not authorized

uses—for example, there might be a rule against transferring the e-book to another computer, or a rule against using a speech synthesizer to read the e-book aloud. It is important to note that neither of these uses is illegal in and of itself; there is no law stating that someone may not lend a book to a friend, or read a book aloud in private. However, Adobe’s proprietary software for accessing these e-books would always abide by the rules encoded in the file, thus denying users the rights they would have enjoyed had the book

be restricted and exploited for profit. When someone buys a printed book, they’re free to keep it as long as they wish and read it as many times as they wish. An e-book, on the other hand, might have limits on reading it more than a certain number of times, or after a certain date; if you wish to continue to access it afterwards, you need to pay. A printed book can be bought from, sold to, or traded at a used bookstore. An e-book, however, might be licenced for use only on one device, making transfer impossible. For the same reason, it might be impossible to give a used e-book to a friend or check one out from a library the way you can with a physical book. Any time someone needs to obtain a book, he or she will have to pay the full price.

All of these restrictions could also be, and in many cases already are being, implemented for other types of electronic media. Most DVD players, for example, are specially programmed to refuse to play any DVD purchased outside its regional market. This helps movie publishers and sellers maximize revenue by preventing people from mail-ordering DVDs from cheaper markets. (In a case which grimly parallels that of Sklyarov, in 2000 sixteen-year-old Jon Johansen was charged under access circumvention laws when he published a simple computer program capable of playing DVDs from any region. Four years later, he was finally acquitted, but not without having accumulated nearly \$30000 in legal costs [6].) In an effort partly to prevent people from copying music to their computers and partly to lock users into certain commercially-produced media players, music publishers have recently begun releasing sabotaged CDs which can be played on a computer only with specially-licensed software. Those who do not have the necessary software must fork over the



been of the regular printed kind. When an independent programmer named Dmitry Sklyarov produced his own e-book-reading software which ignored the access restrictions, he was arrested by the FBI and charged with circumvention of the *DMCA*.

The benefit to the publishers of such a law may not be apparent at first, but consider the many freedoms people enjoy with printed books that with digital media can now

cash to buy it before being able to listen to the music.

### **Production for use or sabotage for profit?**

All these examples clearly show how, under capitalism, businesses use laws to manufacture scarcity of goods in the interests of turning a profit. Instead of allowing the public to freely reproduce and distribute venerable literary and artistic works that should belong to all of humanity, companies shackle them under restrictive copyright licenses, the contravention of which results in heavy fines and even prison sentences. Instead of distributing digital music and movies in standard, published formats which any device can understand, publishers and hardware manufacturers collude to engineer crippled discs which can be played only on certain proprietary systems, and prosecute anyone who builds a cheaper compatible player. Instead of innovation to improve existing media, businesses produce and promote digital books deliberately designed to deny readers the most basic of freedoms they enjoyed with the printed variety.

Faced with such evidence, how can anyone still believe the myth that capitalism works in the interest of the working class by providing us with useful consumer goods? With the advent of high-speed computer networks such as the Internet and inexpensive home computers which can store and copy digital media with the click of a mouse, for the first time in history the working people of this world are finding themselves with access to the means of production and mass distribution of information. Those who previously enjoyed exclusive rights to these means are now scrambling to re-establish their privileged position as their sole beneficiary. They will do this even if it means stopping and even reversing the course of technological innovation. They will do this even if it means using the threat of violence (criminal penalties) to deter those who would avail themselves of said innovation.

The fact of the matter, as has been demonstrated in this article, is that the law is and has always been designed by and for the possessing classes, not for those who must work to create or earn enough money to purchase the literary and artistic works copyright ostensibly “protects”. True, copyright works in part to ensure artists are compensated for their works, but as with all other types of labour, in the vast majority of cases this remuneration is simply a pittance intended to tide the artist over while they produce their next work. Even many famous, multiplatinum-selling rock stars don’t earn more than their country’s median household income [3]. The bulk of the money generated by writers and artists goes to the increasingly obsolescent and parasitic publishing and distribution companies; the artist who finds himself a millionaire is the rare exception, not the rule.

### **Copyright and socialism**

Before we return to the story of the *World Socialist Web Site*, we need to point out one further tactic that capitalist publishers use to justify copyright to the public. They claim that information is a kind of property—“intellectual property”—and that unauthorized copying of information is the same as stealing. However, this comparison is deliberately misleading. Stealing is when someone walks into a library, takes a book off the shelf, and leaves without checking it out. Copyright infringement is when someone walks into a library, photocopies a book for later reading at home, and then replaces the book on the shelf. In the first case, there is one less book in the library, and the public has been deprived of the ability to use it. In the second case, the book remains in the library, and other patrons can continue to read it. Unlike with physical property, ownership of so-called intellectual property is not exclusory; like the atmosphere we breathe, information can be owned and used concurrently by any number of people. Even the legislative and judicial systems have grudgingly

admitted to this, refusing to equate criminal copyright infringement with theft [7]. Nonetheless, publishers continue to propagandize to legislators and consumers that the unauthorized dissemination of information is akin to destructive crimes such as vandalism, armed robbery, and piracy on the high seas.

It is rather telling of the true motives and beliefs of left-wing organizations such as the WSWS, then, that they have no qualms about using the same misleading arguments and terminology respecting “intellectual property” as the capitalist class they purport to oppose. They nominally decry the artificial scarcity produced by capitalism’s laws while at the same time proudly espousing the property-mongering ideals of the monopolistic corporations these laws were designed to benefit. We in the World Socialist Movement believe that the purpose of political literature is not to turn a profit, but to change people’s ways of thinking about government, economics, and society. We want the widest possible audience for our ideas, and in fact encourage people to copy and spread our writings to the greatest extent possible. The WSWS’s characterization of its writings as “protected literary works”, and of those who republish it as thieves and pirates, suggests that they think of political literature in quite a different sense. As is typical of Trotskyist vanguardists, they consider themselves to have a monopoly on political ideas and that the working class cannot be trusted with them. Only their official party vanguard is authorized to dispense and interpret political writings; groups who republish their texts are seen as rival sects seeking to usurp their authority as the true leaders of the working class.

**I**n a true socialist society, however, there will be no need for leaders or owners. The means of production and distribution will be owned and controlled by the community at large. This includes not only factories and railways for the manufacture and

transportation of physical goods, but also instruments for the production and dissemination of information: printing presses, film studios, the computers that drive the Internet, and the television and radio airwaves themselves. Everyone will have free access to goods and services, and society will orient its patterns of production to meet these use needs, rather than for the purpose of turning a profit, which often entails producing artificial conditions of scarcity for certain goods. We have seen in this article how the system of copyright is one of the means capitalism employs to artificially restrict a supply of goods—information—that might otherwise be plentiful. Whereas we currently have the means to produce mass digital copies of a book, film, or music album instantly and at virtually no cost, under capitalism the technology to do so has been crippled or criminalized at the behest of publishers.

While some left-wing groups, like the WSW, hypocritically support the notion that ideas should be owned and controlled, other less authoritarian organizations like the Free Software Foundation, the Creative Commons, and the Electronic Frontier Foundation lobby governments to modify copyright laws to make information more accessible to the general public, or propose new information licensing schemes which operate on top of the existing copyright framework. Such efforts have sometimes succeeded in eroding the power of publishers' monopolies, but they can never truly eliminate it. As long as capitalism is in place, governments will continue to institute and uphold laws to protect the profits of the publishers at the expense of withholding access to information from the working class. Only by replacing capitalism with a system of free access and common ownership will we be able to truly and finally liberate music, literature, and the arts for the benefit of all humanity.

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—TRISTAN MILLER

## A socialist world will be one...

...without classes.  
 ...without countries.  
 ...without governments.  
 ...without money.  
 ...without wages or employment.  
 ...without the need for war.

...with the means of producing goods held democratically in the hands of all the people.  
 ...with production for use, not for profit.  
 ...with decisions on what and how to produce and how to develop made by each local community.  
 ...with sufficient food, clean water, health services, housing, and education for all the world's inhabitants.  
 ...with free access to all that society produces, based on one's personally determined needs.  
 ...with the maxim, "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs".

# Contact us

Interested in learning more about socialism? Want to comment on something you've read in this issue? If so, feel free to contact our main office or your nearest regional contact volunteer.

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## WSM Companion Parties

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# Bolshevik bullshit

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the “education for revolution” policy of the old SPC, Armstrong (after a spell as an MLA) in the reconstituted SPC in 1931 and Pritchard (after a spell with the CCF) in the World Socialist Party of the US.

Angus also claims that by the end of 1921 a majority of members of the SPC had been won over to the idea of forming a Communist Party in Canada on Bolshevik lines. Certainly, most members of the SPC of the time were carried away (mistakenly, if understandably, in our view today) by the coming to power of the Bolsheviks in Russia, but were sufficiently clear-headed to reject, when it came to a vote, accepting the 21 conditions for affiliation to the Communist International. They took the view that while Bolshevism was appropriate for Russian conditions, it wasn’t for a developed capitalist country like Canada where a policy of “education for revolution” remained valid. The formation of the Communist Party—or Workers Party, as it was called—did contribute to the demise of the old SPC in 1925. But in 1931 a number of former SPC members and others reconstituted it as the present SPC, and without any

illusions about Bolshevism in Russia, not just in Canada.

The real lesson of the Winnipeg General Strike, which latter-day romantic Bolsheviks like Angus have yet to learn, was well stated by Pritchard in an article on the strike’s 50th anniversary in 1969:

Strikes may result in changes and even so-called improvements but this is but superficial. This will continue until the workers in sufficient numbers free themselves from the concepts of this society, from ideas that bind them to the notion that the present is the only possible social system, and recognize that under this system “the more things change the more they remain the same”; that even now in their struggles over wages and conditions, like the character in Alice in Wonderland they have to keep running in order to stay in the same place. But the Winnipeg Strike will go down in history as a magnificent example of working class solidarity and courage.” (*Western Socialist*, No 3, 1969).

—ADAM BUICK

# Book review

continued from page 7

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—TRISTAN MILLER

Looking for a good introduction to Marxian theory? Confused about the difference between true socialism and the so-called “Communist” governments of China, Cuba, and the USSR? Want to know what socialism has to offer you?

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<http://www.worldsocialism.org/>

# Death at Dieppe

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access to raw materials, capturing markets to sell products, or taking command of strategic positions. (Bush and his partners in crime didn’t want Hussein selling oil to their prospective commercial rivals, China and the European Common Market.)

Whether or not the 900 Canadians were sent to their deaths so that the war effort could continue in North Africa is a question that can probably never be satisfactorily answered. One question that can be answered, however, is how to prevent future war deaths from

happening. By organizing, consciously and politically, for the capture of political power so that capitalism may be overthrown and socialism established, then, and only then, will we have a world free from war and all its many attendant evils. A world free from poverty, unemployment, pollution, racism, crime, famine, unnecessary disease, planned obsolescence, environmental destruction, regimentation (which pervades all areas of our lives, particularly culture), and the dehumanization of people leading to a multitude of psy-

chological problems. The list is endless.

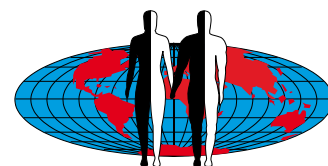
In a socialist world, all will stand equal in relation to the tools of production and the Earth’s natural resources, all of which will be democratically controlled by the whole community, in the interests of the whole community. In such a world, all will cherish all. Love of humanity will reign supreme.

Who wouldn’t want such a world? So why not organize to speedily give it birth?

—STEVE SHANNON

# IMAGINE

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THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA

## 100 years for Socialism

The year 2005 marked the 100th anniversary of the birth of the Socialist Party of Canada. According to J.R. Milne's history, the first meeting of the Executive Committee of our party took place on 19 February 1905 after socialist groups in Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick, and the Yukon Territory adopted the platform of the Socialist Party of British Columbia. Some oldtimers in the party dispute this date, recalling 1903 being used as the starting date.

In any case, it has not been an unbroken century. The Russian Revolu-

tion of 1917 captured the imagination and hopes of the workers around the world and led to the formation of many national Communist parties. Many left our party in the misguided belief that communism could be achieved by similar revolutions in this country, and the party disbanded in 1926. Apparently, by 1931, workers were becoming increasingly disillusioned with events in the Soviet Union and that year the SPC was able to reconstitute itself on a more scientific basis. The SPC, along with its new companion parties in the World Socialist Movement, used Marxian scientific theory to determine that a socialist revolution could not have taken place in Russia due to the circumstances prevailing at the time and the subsequent events and development of Russian society. Rather, we said, a new form of capitalism, organized by the state, was evolving, but this was not socialism. Although what unfolded in the Soviet Union, and later in China and Cuba, has proven our analysis to be correct, many workers at the time were duped into believing Bolshevism was the real thing.

Believing that political power must be gained by a majority of workers who understand socialism and want to put an end to capitalism, the SPC has strived to contest elections. We had early successes in electing J. Hawthorthwaite, P. Williams, and J. M. McInnis to the British Columbia legislature, and C.M. O'Brien to the Alberta legislature in the early twentieth century.

We are proud that we have never wavered from our objective—the

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establishment of a society based on the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interests of society as a whole. We reject reformism as a means to establish socialism. To understand Marxian economics is to understand that capitalism cannot be reformed to work in the interests of any other than the capitalist minority. As a political party, we stand alone in this belief. In addition, we advocate the democratic establishment of socialism only when the vast majority of workers understand and choose socialism—not when a minority, a so-called elite vanguard, tell the rest of us what we want and need. This also sets us aside from the many so-called communist, Marxist-Leninist (an oxymoronic title if ever there was one!), and Bolshevik parties and groups. We run our party as we expect socialism to operate—a free association of producers making democratic decisions in the interests of all. We do not have leaders, only elected officials doing the bidding of the rank and file, for it is not “great”



Speaking for Socialism, July 1965



leaders that will bring socialism, but the will of the whole working class. We use scientific socialist analysis based on Marx's theories to interpret historical and current events, and, in so doing, have been proved correct many times while other groups wander all over the political map looking for answers to fit their preconceived ideas.

**A**part from the aforementioned analysis of the Russian Revolution, our attitude to war is unique and yet simple common sense. At the outbreak of World War I, socialists were forced to develop a response to the patriotic jingoism that led young workers to their deaths in the millions. After careful analysis, it was obvious that the interests of groups of capitalists had clashed and what was at stake was the hegemony of one group over another *vis-à-vis* commerce, strategic territories, trade routes, *etc.*, with the prize being access to more markets and more of the world to plunder and exploit. What was taking place could not be in the interests of workers nor bring socialism any closer. Therefore we oppose all wars, except the class war, on that basis. This was, of course, repeated for World War II, while the various Communist parties wavered for and against war according to the dictates of the Soviet Union. Though opposed to the war when Hitler and Stalin signed the Warsaw Pact, once Hitler invaded Russia these so-called communists changed their tune and were active in recruiting workers to fight—and needlessly die for—the capitalists' interests.

In other areas, such as our analysis of Keynesian economics, the welfare state, national movements, we have differed sharply from the tactics of other parties who always seem to join capitalist parties such as the NDP in putting forth reform-based platforms to attract votes. These platforms invariably lead not to socialism but down a road to nowhere.

*continued on page 12*



Party stall in Victoria, April 1986



Handbills from 1943 (right) and 1945



# What is poverty?

## Starving millions of no interest to the dictates of capital

Some time ago, the *Toronto Star* newspaper, Canada's largest, had a campaign entitled "The War on Poverty". Many articles and editorials have pointed out the levels and effects of this social disease. The *Star* has even proudly noted that its founder was a champion of the anti-poverty cause over 100 years ago, but did not note that if, in all that time, it has not been successful, the solution lies in a different course of action. The following letter, somewhat tongue-in-cheek, was sent to the *Star's* editorial board.

Dear Sirs,

Recently my newspaper was not delivered as usual. I called the *Star* circulation department to report it. After patiently navigating through the automatic system, I eventually got to discuss the matter with a real human being. In the course of going through the details, I asked the operator where she was located. She replied, "Nova Scotia". Residing in Ontario and discussing my address, I was somewhat astounded. After some thought, I came to the conclusion that the *Star* must have outsourced this service to a company who had gone to the most compliant jurisdiction for operating costs like minimum wage, labour laws, etc. to gain an advantage over competitors. This lower cost to the *Star* would help the publisher to realize a larger profit and pay bigger dividends to the investors who would, in their turn, continue to invest in the *Star* rather than other enterprises. For this, the *Star* cannot be blamed, as it is the normal way of operating in a profit-driven economy.

But this also means that those big, bad corporations who relocate their production to low wage countries with "flexible" labour laws are only doing what they have to do to survive. This is what drives wages down and

prevents workers from getting out of the poverty cycle. This brings forth the conclusion that as long as this system of increasing profits continues, poverty is not only endemic in that system but is actually an unavoidable consequence. Thus to eliminate the problem is not a matter of political will or morals, or of finding the money. It is simply a matter of who controls the wealth distribution in our society. Once that control passes into the hands of all of society to distribute however we want, then, and only then, will that wealth be used for the common good, including eliminating poverty.

Needless to say this letter was not published. It was never intended to give a real socialist analysis of the problem of poverty, so it would be fitting to add the following.

Poverty usually falls into two categories for the benefit of sociologists, government departments and the media: relative and absolute. The former refers mainly to developed nations to identify those people not receiving enough money to provide the basic necessities of life expected in our society for themselves and their families. It is usually calculated as a percentage, 50 or 60, of the median wage. Absolute poverty is used to refer to many people in the "developing world" who are in life-threatening situations and who require immediate intervention from government or world agencies.

It is worth remarking that, for the vast majority of the time that humans have wandered the earth, hunting and gathering societies were the general mode of producing the necessary goods, and it was rare that these societies experienced starvation. When it did occur, it was entirely due to natural causes such as weather or animal migration patterns, and it affected the

whole society equally. It was only with the coming of the first agrarian revolution and the advent of private property that access to the necessities of life became restricted for some. As class systems developed dividing humans into the oppressors and the oppressed, so did equality and the idea of privileged access to wealth. All the ancient empires—Sumerian, Greek, Roman, Egyptian—had the rich, the free producers, and the slaves, in descending order of wealth and influence. The feudal system, which succeeded the slave system of the empires, operated with the oppressors—the king, the lords, the church, and their entourages—and the oppressed serfs who worked the land to enrich the owners. Marx wrote, "But whatever form [societies] may have taken, one fact is common to all past ages, viz., the exploitation of one part of society by another." (*Communist Manifesto*) Many parts of the world, especially in the "Third World", continued to function with a mixture of these systems while capitalism was establishing itself in Western Europe. While the more primitive societies were falling behind technologically speaking, and inequality was sometimes a part of their systems, it was again rare that starvation occurred as they were very viable societies in their own environments.

The situation changed radically with the adoption of the capitalist mode of production. Based on private property, large-scale commodity production for profit only, and the exploitation of the worker through the creation and theft of surplus value—that extra value produced by the worker over and above his wage—capitalism introduced a new concept, managed scarcity. The value of commodities is determined by the amount of socially necessary labour that is put into them—i.e., the amount of labour under average conditions of work by the average worker—but price

will vary around that value according to availability. If you want to get the highest price for your commodity, then you control the amount available—flooding the market cheapens the commodity; scarcity raises prices. This is why wheat, for example, is locked away in elevators on the prairies until the price rises sufficiently to make it worthwhile to sell and realize a profit, no matter how desperately it is needed. When the price is high, only the wealthy can partake freely, while the rest make do. In other words, capitalism is driven by the necessity to get the best price on the market and realize the highest possible profit, which not only gives you more capital to work with, it can also give you a leg up on the competition. The fact that people are starving in the millions is of no consequence to the dictates of capital. This applies to other necessities of life such as housing, health care, and clean water.

When capitalism reached the less developed areas, it destroyed their local economies by turning cropland into cash crops for the world market and forcing the displaced farmers to become wage earners at the whim of the market and the profitability of the multinational corporations. The ability of the indigenous populations to feed themselves diminished as they lost control of their lands. This vicious cycle is the cause of poverty in the Third World.

Relative poverty in developed nations is also caused by the need to maximize profits and accumulate and attract capital. Capitalism is in a perpetual boom-and-bust cycle. This is because each enterprise decides for itself how they will operate and how much they will produce—the anarchy of production. When the economy is expanding to meet growing demand, the production units must also expand and employ more labour to take advantage of that demand. There is no planned effort by capitalism as a whole to regulate production to match the need. When supply overtakes demand and there is a surplus of goods on the market selling at low prices and



Absolute poverty: trash dump slum in Jakarta, Indonesia

reduced profit, factories are closed down, machinery is scrapped, and workers are laid off to await the next boom. Thus a certain number of workers is needed to meet the demands of expansion and then tossed away as production slows. In the meantime they are unemployed or living on welfare, and if lucky enough to find work, usually it is temporary or at minimum wages. In any case, it is just barely enough to exist. This group is referred to by Marx as “the reserve army” or “the surplus population” and is as necessary to capitalism as wage labour. Marx wrote, “In such cases [of industrial expansion] there must be the possibility of suddenly throwing great masses of men into the decisive areas... The surplus population supplies these masses... Periods of average activity, production at high pressure, crisis, and stagnation, depends on the constant formation, the greater or lesser absorption, and the re-formation of the industrial reserve army or surplus population.” (*Capital, The Process of the Accumulation of Capital*).

There is another form of poverty that you will not hear about in the media. Whenever a mode of producing wealth for a society is put into motion, a set of relations develops simultaneously between the participants. In capitalism, there develops a set of antagonistic relations between the producers who do not own, and the owners who do not produce. The owners determine what will be produced, when, where, and in what manner. The producers must simply follow instructions and the dictates of capital. All workers are subject to strict parameters set by the owners who employ solely at their discretion. Here the reserve army plays another role—that of maintaining those relations so favourable to the capitalist class. Marx writes, “The industrial reserve army, during the periods of stagnation and average prosperity, weighs down the active army of workers; during the periods of over production and feverish activity, it puts a curb on their pretensions,” and, “The overwork of the employed part of the working class swells the ranks of its reserve, while, conversely, the greater pressure that the





Relative poverty: workers queue for food in Oslo, Norway

reserve, by its competition, exerts on the employed workers, forces them to submit to over-work and subjects them to the dictates of capital." (*Capital*)

In addition to the subordinate position of those who actually produce all the wealth, the owner takes all the surplus value the worker has embedded in the product—that value the workers have produced over and above their wages; the source of all profit. This legalized theft is supported by the systems of society that are essential to, and support, the current economic system—the state government and its legislation, the court system to uphold the legislation, the military and police forces to enforce it, and the prison system to punish transgressors, and the media to propagandize the whole thing. This means that the class responsible for producing the wealth of society, not only does not own and control its own product, but it is severely limited in the access they have to that wealth. On the other hand, the tiny minority of owners not only get the lion's share, but they are able to re-invest the surplus profit as capi-

tal to dominate the workers again and increase their capital once more.

This constant growth of capital is the reason we see the great and ever growing gaps in living standards between the multi-millionaires and billionaires who produce nothing, and the workers who struggle to put a roof over their heads, feed their families, pay for health, education, and so on. In this sense, all workers, no matter what their financial situation, are in a state of relative poverty—relative, that is, to what they are entitled to: the whole loaf, not the crumbs. Marx quotes economist James Bray in *The Poverty of Philosophy*:

The workmen have given the capitalist the labour of a whole year, in exchange for the value of only half a year—and from this, and not from the assumed inequality of bodily and mental powers in individuals has arisen the inequality of wealth and power which at present exists around us. It is an inevitable condition of inequality of exchange—of buying at one price and selling at another—that capitalists shall continue to be capitalists, and working men to

be working men—the one a class of tyrants and the other a class of slaves—to eternity. The whole transaction, therefore, plainly shows the capitalists and the proprietors do no more than give the working man, for his labour of one week, a part of the wealth they obtained from him the week before!—which just amounts to giving him nothing for something... The whole transaction, therefore, between the producer and the capitalist is a palpable deception, a mere farce: it is, in fact, in thousands of instances, no other than a bare-faced though legalized robbery."

It can be seen, then, that poverty, relative or absolute, is a natural consequence of the capitalist system. It can be no more eliminated by raising minimum wages, fairer taxation, or income supplements, than an elephant can fly. While we must give credit to the decency of those people and organizations involved in the struggle to improve conditions for fellow human beings, it is tragic that they spend all their time and resources to alleviate a symptom of the problem and nothing at all to eliminate its cause. The effect, like all attempts to reform the capitalist system, is to treat the symptoms and prolong the disease. Poverty, like many of the ills of our world caused by capitalism, can be eliminated only when we, the producers who do not own, finally realize that the resources of the earth and the products of our labour are the common heritage of all humankind, to be shared freely, as needed, among all peoples of the world. Only then, as Marx said, can we put an end to man's prehistory and begin man's history.

—J. AYERS

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# A century of socialist journalism

## A retrospective of Socialist Party commentary and criticism

In this issue of *Imagine* we are presenting three articles from the annals of the *Western Socialist*, former journal of the Socialist Party of Canada and the World Socialist Party of the United States, to celebrate our history and the dedicated comrades who have worked tirelessly to promote socialism throughout their lives. The parties of the World Socialist Movement believe socialism can be established only when the vast majority of the working class understand what socialism is and choose that society to replace capitalism. Before that can happen, that class must become conscious of its position in capitalism as the producers of all wealth and the owners of nothing, as the exploited class, and, finally, as the class, as a whole, that can bring about the change to socialism themselves. This argument is expounded in the first historical article, "A class conscious majority" by W. A. Pritchard.

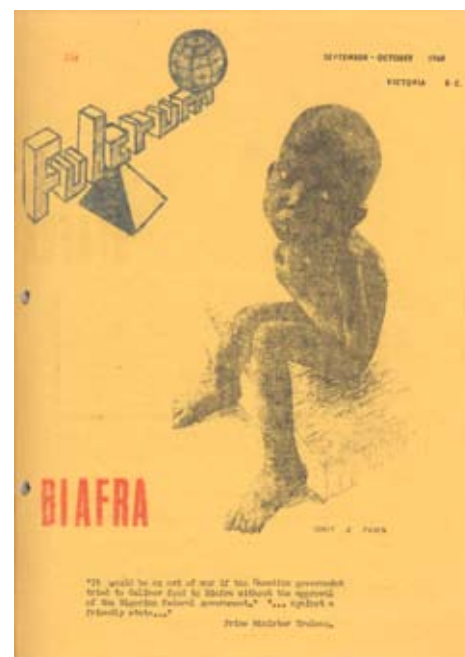
The next article deals with the Winnipeg General Strike, an important event in Canadian labour history. It began, as many strikes do, with a demand for higher wages. It was not a call for socialism, and, had that been the case, the Winnipeg workers would have been a minority of the total Canadian labour force. The SPC, therefore, did not see the strike as an opportunity to establish socialism, as did many left-wing groups. As the article's author

notes, "strikes may result in changes and even so-called improvements but this is superficial." While the strike was "a magnificent example of working class solidarity and courage", socialists understand that it is only the complete replacement of the capitalist system that will bring about a lasting improvement in all workers' conditions.

The third article, "What can we do about peace?", echoes the party's attitude to the constant state of war and conflict that exists on our planet. Not only is it as relevant today as when it was first published in 1963, but the ideas it espouses are just as applicable to 1914 when the party's early members had to state a clear response to the impending war. It was clear then, as it is now, that conflicts between nations are really conflicts between competing groups of capitalists over resources, trade advantages, control of strategic routes and areas—in short, maintaining or grabbing an economic edge over another capitalist group. War is, therefore, endemic to the capitalist mode of production, is of no interest or benefit

to the workers (indeed it is they who must do the fighting and dying), and will not bring socialism one inch closer. Socialists, then, withdraw from all wars but the class war.

—EDITORS



Right: *The Western Socialist*, journal of the Socialist Party of Canada, Vol. 1 No. 1, Winnipeg, October 1933

Far right: *Fulcrum*, journal of the Victoria Local of the Socialist Party of Canada, September/October 1968

Top: *World Socialist*, journal of the World Socialist Movement, No. 6, Winter 1986-7

# A class-conscious majority

(Reprinted from the *Western Socialist*, Vol. 37 No. 275, 1970, pp. 11–13)

...no government can impose its will upon a consciously unwilling majority...

The above truncated extract from an article by a Socialist writer is here presented in this form since it struck me as being a suitable text for a sermon—as some parson might say; or a theme in music which could be developed and presented with a whole series of variations. I shall now try my hand at a transposition or—to use the musician's term—an inversion.

So from the negative to the positive form my transposition might read:

...no conceivable power could successfully resist a consciously willing and determined class conscious majority...

I now replace the quotation as given at the head of this article into the context from which it was taken, by giving the whole of a concluding paragraph of an article by Ivan in the *Socialist Standard* of February, 1969.

If we say, then, that Socialism will be the society of freedom which will not know such disfigurements as political prisoners we are inviting an obvious question. Why are there no socialists in prison for their opinions? The answer is equally obvious. At the moment Socialism, is not a threat to a capitalist state. But the *socialist movement grows through the developing consciousness among workers—and remember no government can impose its will upon a consciously unwilling majority*. So when Socialism is a threat, and the ruling class would like to do something about it—it *will be too late*. (Emph. mine, W. A. P.)

I pursue the line of thought which is herein revealed because, in so many instances throughout the past years—here and in Canada—have I heard well informed socialists, from the

speaker's platform, answer a question in such fashion as to make the confusion of the interested questioner even more confounded.

Following a usually well presented argument for socialism the speaker gets a question: "You have put up a rather persuasive argument and I am interested but I would like to know 'How are you going to do it?' "

The answers I have heard so many times might be brief, bright and brotherly, but decidedly not to the point. "You select your delegate or candidate and send him to Parliament—or Congress, as the case may be." Put this way—it has so often been put just this way to my knowledge—it becomes a "bald and unconvincing" declaration. Of course, it is true, insofar as we know the seat of power to be in these institutions, but such overly simplistic statements—granting them to be true—can result only in greater confusion and misunderstanding than had a direct falsehood been uttered.

Com. Ivan refers to "a consciously unwilling majority." I use the phrase "consciously willing and determined class conscious majority." Both phrases carry the same concept. And that is: a majority fully aware of its position, as members of a class, and aware of the needs of that class.

The class which today constitutes a majority of the population, in all those countries where the capitalist mode of production obtains, is the working class. But the majority of this class is by no means aware of its place in this society as a subjugated and exploited one, and therefore is also unaware of the cause of unemployment, poverty, war, or any other of the horrible features of the current scene. So we say of these: "They are not *class conscious*." Conversely, of that minority within this majority who do understand their status as exploited producers, and realize that this can be abolished through concerted action

and clear knowledge, we say: "These are *class conscious*."

The reason for these *class conscious* being organized into a *political* party, is to engage in well considered and well presented propaganda directed to their *un-class conscious* fellow workers. This calls for an analysis of the character of the power which holds the worker in subjugation—the techniques of brain-washing, distorted information concerning events and peoples, the manipulation of "alleged" educational processes, *etc.*, by which the ruling class is able to keep its ideas as the ideas of society. The workers are thus fooled into accepting these ideas of the masters as being the ideas best suited to the promotion of their material interests. "If it were not for the capitalist where would the worker be? The capitalist creates jobs. And where would we be without jobs?" This crude idea is so often expressed by workers when confronted with the socialist case.

The socialist's task is to work at removing these cobwebs from the mind of the worker; to stress by diligent and simple presentation the contrary idea: "Where would the capitalist be without the worker?" Completely helpless. For all those goods and services required to maintain society are produced by the labor of the working class, and the surplus value created by labor supplies the wealth upon which the idle owner lives and the capital accumulation by which he increases his holdings and his power.

But this power is maintained and protected through the power of the State—that instrument of coercion and administration which has existed, under different forms, in human society since the dawn of civilization and the birth of the property "idea." And in all highly developed countries the seat, and the source, of this power, today, is the institution of "parliament" whatever name it may carry in whatever country.



For the working class to free itself from its present position, it must capture these bastions of power and privilege, and use them as instruments in that endeavor. Because the vast majority of the working class is unaware either of its real status or of the need for doing away with it, as Ivan puts it: "At the moment socialism is not a threat to a capitalist state."

Ivan states, though, "the socialist movement grows through the developing consciousness among workers." We work in our propaganda to speed this growth.

While we indicate parliament as the seat of capitalist power and defender of capitalist interests, suggesting thereby that the capture of political power by the workers calls for the prior capture of parliament, there is much more involved than "selecting our candidate and sending him to the House, *etc.*" And it is incumbent, in my opinion, upon our propagandists to explain these things and not be content merely with a bald and off-hand statement such as this article indicates has been used much too often. If it were only used once that would be once too many.

For the present, then, and until that time when as Ivan says: "the developing consciousness among workers" has produced the resistance to attempted coercion by a "consciously unwilling majority," or, conversely, when "no conceivable power could successfully resist a consciously willing, and determined *class conscious* majority," we carry on the work of education among the workers, opposing and exposing the "ideology" of the ruling class by stressing and elucidating the "ideology" demanded by working class interests.

In short, to make our ideas pervasive; and when these ideas have become sufficiently pervasive then—again making use of Com Ivan's term—"It will be too late," for the masters, or calling upon a phrase once used by this writer on another occasion, "With these agents of power (the state forces) in the hands of an *enlightened majority*, no aggressive minority, no power on earth, can successfully re-establish itself."

So, for the present, "when socialism is not a threat to a capitalist state," and until that time when working class ideas "have become sufficiently pervasive," we make such use of parliamentary elections as we can, for here is a

ready to hand situation—and ready to hand machinery—of which socialists can avail themselves. The day will come when class conscious workers through the agency of their organization (political party) will send their delegates to the seats of power, backed by that ideology which has then become "sufficiently pervasive."

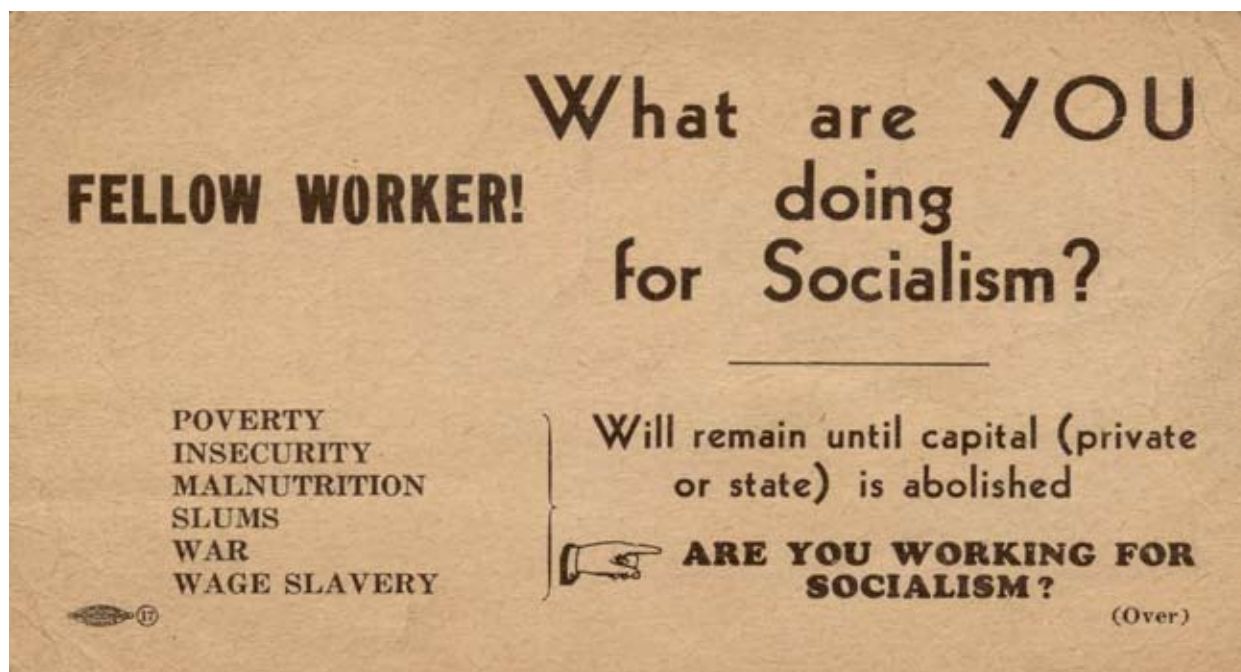
For the present, education is the first priority. An election provides a sounding board for our ideas, and as a barometer to measure our influence.

And for those who may be nominated as candidates at such times and for such purposes as I have outlined, I would suggest their campaign promise be given in this wise.

We are running in this election to spread socialist education. All political parties make promises. We also make one: "We promise *nothing*"—and thus be the only party which is able to keep its promise.

**B**rethren! Here ends this short and simple sermon. Let us then work, for events are moving rapidly.

—W. A. PRITCHARD



SPC handbill,  
circa 1935



# The 1919 Winnipeg General Strike

(Reprinted from the *Western Socialist*, Vol. 36 No. 269, 1969, pp. 12-16)

I have been bombarded throughout the past half-century from many quarters to write on this event. Hitherto I have refused, being reluctant to do so, feeling that one cannot deal with events in which one may have been involved and do so with the objectivity necessary. For the same reason I refrain from reviewing books in which I may have been (honorably or otherwise) mentioned.

But now, this year being the fiftieth anniversary of that historic event, receiving an official request from the Executive Committee of the Socialist Party of Canada, and simultaneously one from the United Steel Workers of America (Canadian Section) I feel I must comply. The Steel Workers, with headquarters in Toronto, will hold their National (annual) Policy Conference in Montreal, May 1st and 2nd, this year, and intend to commemorate the Winnipeg Strike's fiftieth anniversary and have their proceedings covered by national radio and possibly television.

As to the Strike and myself. Contrary to general opinion I had little or almost nothing to do with it personally, and therefore have very little knowledge of all the ingredients which led up to it. That the panic-struck authorities pounced upon me in their blind fury and were successful in having me jailed, does not alter the fact. That I went to Winnipeg at the behest of a committee of workers as a spectator and in the week (approximately) I was there, sitting by invitation once with

the Strike Committee, and addressing a few open-air gatherings, gave the authorities their chance and they took it.

I have no documents in my possession at the moment and must rely only upon a memory which at the age of eighty-one may be defective, although

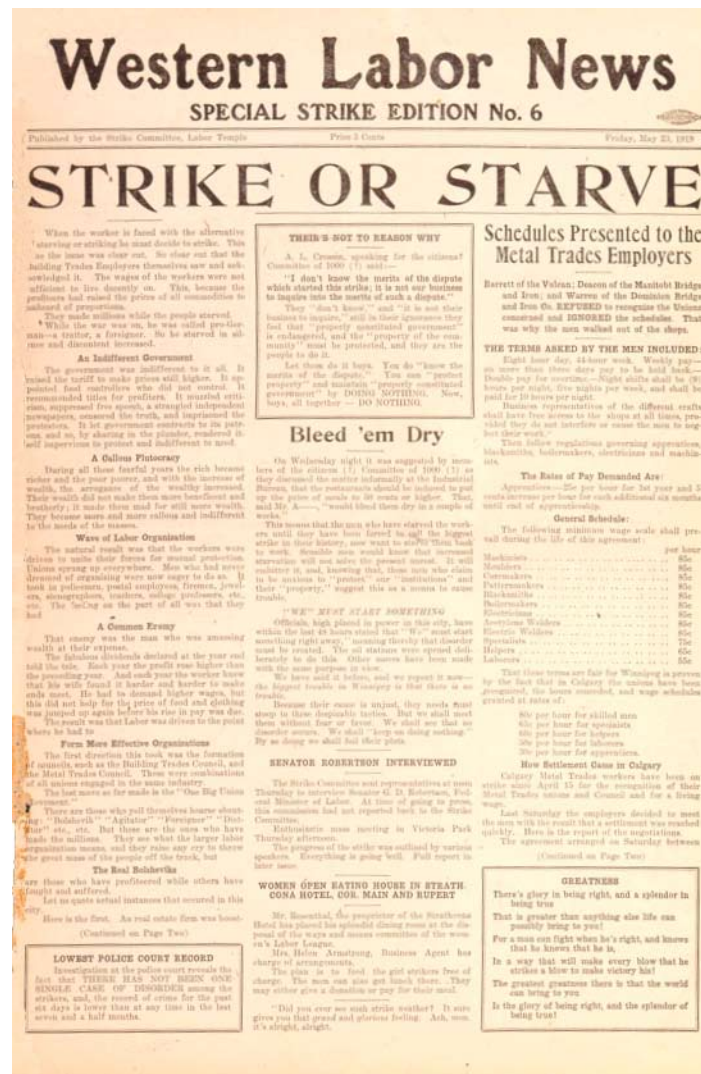
Also, I understand, a further work on this subject will shortly appear from the pen of David J. Bercuson of Montreal. These are recommended for what they might contain to students of Canadian history. I have but few reservations for the master's opus and these only on rather minor points.

## Background of the Strike

To understand the Strike one should place it in the context of the social atmosphere of the country, the position of organized labor (especially in Western Canada), together with the political situation of that time.

The government was a coalition wartime product. The war (to make the world safe for Democracy) was over—but not the peace (the outbreak of which was "more cataclysmic than the outbreak of war.")

The Government had been operating for some time less and less by statute and more and more by the exigent weapon of "Order-in-Council." The Meighen administration came to be known as "government by Order-in-Council." The people were ordered not to eat meat on two days of the week but at the same time were not informed as to how the many poor were to get meat on the other five days. A censorship, under the erudite Col. Chambers was established and hundreds of publications were banned, the penalty for possessing any cited: twenty years in the penitentiary. The governmental "sublimity" slid rapidly downhill to the lowest depths of the "ridiculous." For under this Order-in-Council such



works as Darwin's *Origin of Species*, Tyndall's *Fragments of Science*, and even the Savoy operas of Gilbert and Sullivan were placed on the governmental "Index Expurgatorious." This in the attempt to ban the socialist and labor classics of a century.

Rapidly rising prices affected all, particularly workers. The allowances to the wives and families of men in the service overseas had not been increased and many hardships were the lot of these folk. Scandals in connection with the war effort were popping up all over the country in which prominent patriots figured: The Ross rifle that jammed; the "Flavelle" affair; and the noise about hay for the armed forces. And when the cry about corruption in the purchase of hay went up governmental donkeys immediately cocked their long ears.

Against these growing enormities Labor, particularly in the West, protested vigorously. They accepted reluctantly the order to eat meat but not on the two specified days of the week; they objected, somewhat as to what they should read, or what a man might have in his own library, but when instructions appeared as to what they should think, they balked.

In British Columbia in 1918, the employees of the Street Railway Co. tied up transportation in Vancouver, North Vancouver, Victoria, and New Westminster for some time, their demands being for raise in pay but more so for a reduction of the working day from nine to eight hours. As one of these strikers said to this writer at the time: "Bill, if we don't get the eight-hour day now, it will be a long time." Many other instances of unrest among the workers could be cited, and all this could be accompanied with the fact of Western Canadian Labor's dissatisfaction with the Canadian Trades Congress and its generally reactionary attitude.

### The Strike starts

Into this setting one must place the Winnipeg Strike. So far as I can recall it developed in this wise: the organized workers in the Building Trades tried to

open negotiations with the City's Building Masters on wages and working conditions, stipulating that they wished to have the Building Trades Council, of which they were members, act as their bargaining agency. This was refused out of hand. A long story made short is that was how the building workers went on strike. At the same time the machinists, boiler makers, *etc.*, in what were called the contract shops, tried to open negotiations with the Ironmasters of the City (Manitoba Bridge and Iron Works, Dominion Bridge Co., Vulcan Iron Works, *etc.*) in order to have the rates of pay for the same categories in the railway shops. These rates had been set for the railroads by William G. McAdoo. They were working under a signed agreement, the result of collective bargaining, at approximately 40% higher rates than their brothers in the contract shops. As with the Building Masters, the Iron Masters refused to bargain. They, like the building trades workers, wanted a bargaining agency: the Metal Trades Council.

And that is how it started.

### Some highlights

A short account of a large and important event, such as the Winnipeg Strike, requires that specifics must give way to generalities. Nonetheless I'll try to deal with some highlights as I can best recall them from my week's sojourn in Winnipeg during the Strike.

Early in May 1919, the workers in the Metal and Building Trades had already "hit the bricks." The international offices of all these unions gave no endorsement and no help. These men were on strike for a principle and without pay. Their only recourse was appeal to the general body of the city's workers. And this body was, of course, the Trades and Labor Council. So, May 6th, 1919, the Trades Council was confronted with the question of either giving support to the strikers, or not. Following long and heated debate the decision was made to take a vote of all the Council's affiliates on the question of a strike in support of the building trades and metal workers.

The result was announced at the next Council meeting, May 13th, 1919: over eleven thousand in favor; five hundred against. The strike was called for 11 a.m. Thursday, May 15th.

Seventy unions voted, all in favor. According to the report of H. A. Robson, K. C., appointed commissioner to investigate and report on the strike the vote was fairly conducted. From questions he claims to have put to certain members and officers of eighteen unions, some of whom were opposed to the strike "stated that the large majority had voted in favor..." [sic]

I found out quickly what would be considered a phenomenon under other circumstances and in another geographical area. Some thirteen thousand organized workers on strike in a city, have their numbers greatly augmented, almost overnight, by the sudden strikes of unorganized workers, from candy workers to newspaper vendors. This demanded attention and forthwith organizing committees were created to organize the striking unorganized.

The police had also voted and came out on strike, only to be requested by the strike committee to go back to their jobs. The reason for this should be apparent to any serious analyst of the situation. Not until they were confronted with the demand made later to denounce the strike, express regret for their part in it did the bulk of the police force appear as strikers. They were forced out by the forces of "Law and Order," and their places filled with an assortment of second-story men, forgers, burglars, *etc.*, chiefly imported from Minneapolis. I was to meet with and observe these pillars of justice in the County Jail later. But that is another story.

What lesson this strike committee was soon to learn (composed of men of different political outlooks though it was) was that when a withdrawal of efficiency on the part of labor takes place in a community everything stops. No milk and bread for the people, or for hospital needs, *etc.*, and this affects not merely men and women but infants.

In this acute situation the committee acted with good sense and promptitude. The committee was composed of fifteen members and was thereupon named the "inner" committee. It organized another committee of three hundred known as the outer committee, which then subdivided into communities specifically charged with those functions that would keep the city population as a viable community. So milk and bread, *etc.*, supplies were maintained, transportation organized, and so on. Of course, there were inconveniences but the city was kept alive—and by the good sense, humanitarianism, and organization of the workers. The bosses could not do it. Those who had performed these social services, *etc.*, heretofore for wages now were doing it without pay. This might give one a gleam of light as to just how socially unnecessary wages and the wage system really are.

Significant too was the action of the Strike Committee in requesting the theatre owners to re-open. This was a measure designed to keep people from congregating on the streets, a condition conducive to volatile and irresponsible action that could occur through the gathering of crowds, and one which, no doubt, would have been welcomed by the authorities as an excuse for violent repression.

So that the theatre owners would not be accused by the strikers (and one must understand that the families involved there numbered well over thirty thousand) placards were placed outside the theatres "Open by Authority of the Strike Committee." One theatre manager had thrown upon his picture screen this message: "Working in Harmony with the Strike Committee."

Also, in contrast with so many other strikes, this had no demonstrations, protests, or those other manifestations of which we see so much today. People were exhorted to keep the peace and keep off the streets. To this end numerous public meetings took place in the various parks of the city and its environs. The only parades of which

this writer has knowledge were the rather huge parades of the returned soldiers sympathetic to the strike, and the significantly small parades of those supporting the Citizen's Committee, composed chiefly of the officer caste. Common sense on both sides in this connection seemed to have been used by both parade managers. They paraded at different times, or, if not, trotted off in different directions. The Strikers' soldier element also held daily sessions, of what they termed their "parliament" in Victoria Park.

### How the Strike was broken

Attempts were made from time to time by elements on both sides to come to a compromise and end the dispute. I remember being asked to accompany a delegation in this connection to meet with one from the anti-strike soldiers. The meeting was presided over by Canon F. G. Scott, senior chaplain of the First Division in France. He came to Winnipeg to look after "his boys," evidently had no interest in politics, a very gracious and charming individual, and with a deep sympathy for the Strike and the strikers. He seemed to me, from my short observation, to be very much attached to Russell.

The members of the delegation which I accompanied were Winning,

Russell and Scoble. The spokesman for the other side was a young army officer, an attorney, Captain F. G. Thompson. My immediate impression of him as the talks opened was that he had now discovered the first arena in which he could demonstrate his legal expertise. All his questions were such as to provide material for legal action and he was definitely addicted, in my opinion, to the job of involving Russell in a legal tangle. I, thereupon, advised Russell not to attempt the answering of the obviously loaded questions. There may have been many other efforts on both sides towards affecting a settlement, but the foregoing is the only one of which I have any personal knowledge.

It was at the close of this abortive meeting that I overheard Canon Scott tell Russell that he had been ordered home to Eastern Canada.

As I remember Winnipeg, during the week of my stay (I had a longer stay later on, but that was if I remember aright, quite involuntary) it was the most peaceful city I had ever seen, a well disciplined and behaved community, singularly free from the crimes which are so noticeable in our cities today, and remained so until the installation of the special police (criminals and thugs already referred to).



Strikers surround the Board of Trade building





The Mounted Police charging down Main Street, 21 June 1919

The strike did not seem to be weakening, not to the extent that the employers expected, so drastic action was needed. And this was used in the midnight, or early morning, raids on the homes of certain men. The six who were so unceremoniously “kidnaped” from their warm beds in the wee morning hours, were Russell, Queen, Armstrong, Heaps, Ivens and Bray. R. J. (Dick) Johns had not been in Winnipeg during the entire strike period, but was carrying out his duties as a member of the War Relations Labor Board in Montreal. I was taken from a CPR train in the city of Calgary, on my way home to Vancouver.

At the same time, several labor sympathizers from North Winnipeg who had the misfortune to carry “foreign” sounding names, especially Russian, were also swept into the net, and shipped with the rest to Stony Mountain Penitentiary. This I opine was (to slightly paraphrase the inimitable phrase of Gilbert and Sullivan’s Pooh-Bah) undertaken as “merely corroborative detail, intended to give artistic

verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing (narrative).“

By this means was the strike broken. What lessons can be taken therefrom depends on how the workers now view the event. Unknown, perhaps, to a large majority of Canadian workers is the fact that what is now accepted without question—the principle of collective bargaining—resulted. Today the metal contract shops in Winnipeg all have agreements with the United Steel Workers. Several other so-called problems were attended to as a result of the Mather and the Robson commissions.

### Lessons of the Strike

But while forms may have changed, and some “improvements” made—for instance in the living conditions, *etc.*, of lumber workers and others—the basic fact remains. The workers are still wage recipients and the masters the beneficiaries of the surplus values extracted from the result of labor’s effort.

The workers still must engage in confrontations and even conflicts with their masters. The labor history since

Winnipeg is replete with instances: the longshoremen of Vancouver—the then only remaining organized body of waterfront workers on the Pacific Coast in 1922; the strikes of miners and lumber workers; the Kirkland Land Strike of 1941. But why go on?

Strikes may result in changes and even so-called improvements but this is but superficial. This will continue until the workers in sufficient numbers free themselves from the concepts of this society, from the ideas that bind them to the notion that the present is the only possible social system, and recognize that under this system “the more things change the more they remain the same”; that even now in their struggles over wages and conditions, like the character in *Alice in Wonderland* they have to keep running harder in order to stay in the same place.

But the Winnipeg Strike will go down in history as a magnificent example of working class solidarity and courage.

—W. A. PRITCHARD

### *continued from page 2*

This, then, is our legacy, to be passed on to new generations of workers until they, as a mass, come to their senses and realize there is a better way to produce and distribute wealth. In this issue of *Imagine* we have tried to give you a sense of our history, but it is to the future we must look to resolve the antagonisms and outrages of the capitalist system. To put an end to poverty, inequality, class-based society, starvation, war, and want, there is, as there has always been, but one answer—to establish a socialist society. No amount of reforms, beseeching the government to act in our interests, or petition-signing will suffice. A simple vote for real socialism, and the willingness to put it into practice once others have done likewise, will do the trick.

—EDITORS

# What can we do about peace?

## Nobel Peace winner joins Nuclear Club

(Reprinted from the *Western Socialist*, Vol. 30 No. 232, 1963, pp. 5-7)

It was no surprise to learn that Lester Pearson has decided that Canadian military forces should be equipped with nuclear and atomic warheads and arms. It does not surprise the socialist one bit to encounter this switch in a professed opponent of A-arms to one of supporter. History is laced with people

who profess one thing before election to office and either change half-way there or when elected.

Does it make any difference whether or not Canada is to become a member of the "nuclear club"? I do not think so. To the mass of people throughout the world the result will be the same—death and destruction—with or without these arms for Canada, unless we prevent war. How, then, can we pre-

vent war? What are we to do about it? These seem to be pertinent questions.

At first glance it appears as though we can do very little about it. General Norstad, President Kennedy and now Lester Pearson have had their say and that seems to be the end of the matter. It is asserted, by some, that the working class will have no say in the matter nor have ever had a say on the question of war. In a sense, however, this statement is quite false. We have had and still can have much to say about it. We have so far elected to support things as they are and the result is apparent to all—a future which threatens death and destruction to all mankind. Can we change this situation? Assuredly we can.

In the first place, instead of repeating like parrots the phrases spewed out of the television and radio boxes, we can investigate this supposedly best of all possible worlds—explore beneath the clouds of subterfuge, deceit and lies. Purposeful investigation must lead to the discovery of the *cause* of war with all of its varying degrees of horror, death, and destruction.

What is it, then, that gives rise to conflicts between nations? What is it, furthermore, that engenders disagreements and strikes between employer and employed? To find cause for the first question is to discover the answer to the second. Nations are forever in conflict because the owners of the means of life within these nations must compete and struggle with one another in furtherance of their material interests. They must forever strive to outdo one another in the never-ceasing search for markets and sources of raw materials. In the jungle world of capitalism the maxim must be *compete* (with no holds barred) or *die*! Herein lies the key to the problem. In



Maryon and Lester Pearson receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, 1957

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# Notes on our early history

## A timeline of the early years of the Socialist Party of Canada

**1905** 19 February: First meeting of the Dominion Executive Committee of the Socialist Party of Canada. • Hawthornthwaite and Williams elected to BC legislature. • Party propagandist E. T. Kingsley, who lost both legs in a railway accident, publishes his own journal, the *Western Clarion*, with a circulation of 4–10 000.

**1907** Toronto members arrested at a meeting.

**1908** Kingsley addresses a meeting of 1000 in Winnipeg. Meeting stopped by police. • D. G. Mackenzie, a party member since 1904, becomes editor of the *Clarion*. Recognised as the party's finest writer, he also wrote the Manifesto for the party.

**1909** SPC and Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) members arrested for 'speaking out against the master class'. Comrades Matthews and Hemmings spend seven days in one of 'His Majesty's Drawing rooms' rather than pay a \$1 fine for holding a street meeting. • The DEC issues a resolution not to affiliate with the Second International, which consisted mainly of groups interested in immediate reforms. • O'Brien elected in Alberta.

**1910** Some foreign-language locals break away to form separate groups over reformism. • O'Brien criticized in the legislature for giving a lecture on socialism rather than addressing the question.

**1911** The Socialist Party of Great Britain (SPGB) and its ideas disseminated throughout Canada by the *Socialist Standard*, which heavily influences the non-reform section of the party. The Toronto local breaks away to form the Socialist Party of North America and becomes the first

Canadian group to adopt the SPGB principles. SPNA later dissolves and some members return to the SPC.

**1912** A meeting on Powell Grounds, Vancouver, addressed by Pettipeace, Lestor, and the IWW broken up by police 'Cosacks' and 25 arrested. Three IWW members given three months for refusing to swear on the Bible. Several more attempts to hold meetings at the same venue also broken up by police. • Williams elected in BC but eventually allies with the Social Democratic Party.

**1913** O'Brien defeated in Alberta, despite the existence of 26 locals in the province.

**1914** Canada enters WWI, "the war for democracy", while suppressing free speech at home. Religious groups, including the Salvation Army, continue to hold street meetings undisturbed. • Socialist Party Manifesto to the workers of Canada: "Wars have their origin in the disputes of the international capitalist class. The war will claim many workers' lives in a quarrel that is not theirs. Considering the fact that the workers produce all the wealth but receive only a pittance in return, only the struggle to end this injustice is worthwhile. Workers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains! You have a world to gain!"

**1916** Comrades J. Reid and W. Gribble arrested and imprisoned for sedition. • SPC continues its anti-war stance and contests elections.

**1917** Conscription introduced and opposed by unions and, of course, the SPC: "Thus we protest emphatically against the proposed Act to enforce military service upon us. Our masters' quarrels do not arouse

any enthusiasm in us. Our quarrel has ever been, since we realized our position as slaves, and ever will be, until our status as slaves is abolished, a quarrel against the master class the world over. The International Working Class has but one *real* enemy, the International Capitalist Class." • Several members, including Tom Cassidy, Sid Rose, Ginger Goodwin, Dave Aitken, Joe Naylor, Roy Devore, Alex Shepard, and Moses Baritz, go into hiding or are arrested for evading or opposing the draft. Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Articles by revolutionaries such as Lenin and Trotsky appear in the *Clarion*. Later, after events in Russia develop further, skepticism and then outright opposition grow to the new order that grows out of the revolution. • Government hysteria and "red scare"—organizations promoting governmental, social, industrial, economic change are banned. • SPC meeting broken up by returning "patriotic" soldiers and party offices destroyed.

**1918** The *Western Clarion* banned and replaced with the *Red Flag*, which in turn is suppressed and replaced with the *Indicator*.

**1919** Winnipeg General Strike: SPC not directly involved, but five of eight union leaders imprisoned were SPC members (G. Armstrong, R. Bray, R. J. Johns, W. A. Pritchard, R. B. Russell) and party literature was used in the trial to show that the strike was "the work of the devil".

**1920** Ban on the *Western Clarion* lifted. The Third International triggered an examination of the methods of revolution: insurrection or parliamentary route. • The Workers' Party of Canada formed, later to become The Communist Party. Many SPC members leave to join. •



G. Armstrong elected to the Manitoba legislature.

**1925** The *Clarion*, reflecting the declining membership, ceases publication.

**1931** The Socialist Party of Canada is re-formed by Armstrong, Lestor, Neale, Breeze, Kaiser, and others. The declaration of principles of the Socialist Party of Great Britain is adopted.

**1932** The *Western Socialist* journal launched. • Clarity on Russia: Bolshevism examined and found wanting, and not socialist.

**1939** Solid opposition to WWII on the same grounds as the first: a war between capitalist interests and having nothing to do with the working class or the establishment of socialism. Contrasts sharply with the Communist Party's stances—for the fight against fascism, then against the war after the Soviet-German nonaggression pact, then for the war again when that pact was broken, and actively recruiting workers for the capitalist side. • The *Western Socialist* becomes a joint publication of SPC and WSPUS.

(Source: J.M. Milne's *History of The Socialist Party of Canada*.)

—EDITORS

**continued from page 13**

it does require some effort on the part of those who would seek it. Knowledge of the world we live in and how it operates can be acquired with a minimum of effort. The socialist case can be examined and its validity measured in the light of unfolding events. Whatever the effort the rewards will amply compensate.

The conflict, then, which continues among the nations has as its cause

the effort to realize the surplus-value extracted from the working class, the rival national capitalists must forever vie with one another in the markets of the world and those nations which can sell the most commodities and make the most profit become, in consequence, the most powerful and the most influential.

In this endeavor of the owning class of each country to gain profit, power and influence, however, there can be no real interest for the workers. The mass of people, forced to work for wages or salaries throughout their lives (when they are not unemployed), can never gain more, on the average, than what is required to produce and reproduce their particular abilities. The average worker enters the world heir to nothing but his parents to work and care for him. He spends his life in ceaseless toil or in the search for it, and leaves the world almost as he came into it—with nothing but his children to carry on this tradition of labour.

We, the vast mass of the world, working all our lives and the vast masses who have preceded us back through the ages, have toiled and laboured and yet, after these aeons of work have still only poverty! And why may we ask? Because the means and instruments for producing wealth do not belong to society, as a whole, but to a small but privileged minority who live but to exploit and appropriate unto themselves the fruits of the labour of society. This is the basis for the struggle which they prefer to present to us as a struggle between ideologies, "Ways of Life," and so forth. The so-called struggle between "communism" and the "free, democratic," type of society is actually but a struggle for control over spheres of influence such as Cuba, Berlin, Laos, Vietnam, Africa, and other areas of contention. They are but struggles to gain control over the social wealth of the world.

How can this be altered? What can we do about it? Inasmuch as we are never consulted in time of crisis how can we change this sorry state of things? The answer is simple although

the same basis as the conflict which is inherent in the struggle between capital and labour. The struggle on the part of the employers to extract a maximum amount of labour from their workers for a minimum amount of wages gives rise to the strikes and lockouts which plague all society. In the final analysis, this is but a struggle over the wealth of society and the question of the division of the wealth created by the working class. Furthermore, it should be apparent that those who own the means of life shall amass unto themselves the greater portion of the wealth of society leaving for those who possess nothing but their ability to labour, sufficient only to enable them to continue the process of production.

Let us now return to the question with which we started. What can we do about it? The answer should now be clear. We can apply our understanding of the causes of struggle to an effort to change the world. Rather than attempting to adapt to conditions in the struggle for survival, the task is one of *changing* the conditions in order that the conflicts and strife which are an everyday feature of today shall be resolved. The question of nuclear weapons as opposed to "conventional" weapons is irrelevant. The only weapon required to save the world from obliteration is the weapon of knowledge, in the hands and heads of the majority. Search it out and obtain it, for with it we shall begin to live as human beings rather than as pawns in a life and death struggle for domination over the resources of the world. With the proper application and use of understanding, these resources will be restored to humanity as a whole. We, who are not consulted today, shall with our knowledge and our political action decree that the means of life shall be commonly owned by all mankind and that mankind shall finally be released from the horror of war and the horror of capitalism, in general. *That's* what we can do about it!

—GLADYS CATT

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## WSM Companion Parties

The Socialist Party of Canada is just one member of a world-wide association of socialist parties known as the World Socialist Movement:

### World Socialist Party of Australia

P.O. Box 1266  
North Richmond  
Victoria 3121

### Socialist Party of Great Britain

52 Clapham High Street,  
London SW4 7UN  
spgb@worldsocialism.org  
www.worldsocialism.org/spgb

### World Socialist Party (New Zealand)

P.O. Box 1929  
Auckland, NI  
www.worldsocialism.org/nz

### World Socialist Party

#### of the United States

P.O. Box 440247  
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## The Socialist Party of Canada

### Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of society as a whole.

### Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Canada holds:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into an agent of emancipation and the overthrow of plutocratic privilege.
7. That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interest of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
8. The Socialist Party of Canada, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to support these principles to the end that a termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

# IMAGINE

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## A Call To Action

Eds.

This is a call to all those who must sell their mental and physical capabilities in order to survive. It doesn't matter whether you call your payment a wage or a salary, or how much it is, or whether you work in coveralls or in a suit. If you do not own the tools of production at your work place, then you must work if, how, and when, your employer says so. That, of course, applies to the vast majority of the world's population.

What are we asking you to do? Firstly, take a few minutes to look at the state of the world around you. In a rich country such as Canada, it is easy to think almost everyone is doing OK. Many own a house, or will do after a few decades of payments that total way more than the buying price; many families own two cars-necessary so that both adults can go to work in order to pay for the house and the extra car;

many have some extra disposable income after paying the bills for holidays, entertainment and a few extras. Yet there is that nagging fly in the ointment. Sporadically, reports surface that indicate all is not well. More and more, our jobs and benefits are less secure; we are told one in five children are raised in poverty and are denied the experiences of normal human development; there is always unemployment no matter how the government cooks the books and ignores those who have given up looking for jobs and those who are underemployed; in the rich GTA, almost one million people per year use food banks, no matter that many of them have full time jobs; the gap between rich and poor grows ever wider at an alarming rate

And how about the rest of the world? Consider this information from "The State of The World" ([globalnetnews-summary@lists.riseup.net](mailto:globalnetnews-summary@lists.riseup.net)).

- Since WWII there have been 250 major wars killing twenty-three million people, 90% of them civilians.
- There are over 35 major conflicts in the world today.
- There are over five hundred

million small arms and light weapons circulating in the



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world today.

- There are approximately thirty thousand nuclear warheads, five thousand on hair-trigger alert.
- Current global military spending is around eight hundred billion dollars— more than the total annual income of the poorest 45% of the world.
- Thirty-five per cent of the world's population live in countries where basic civil rights such as freedom of speech, of the press, of religion, and fair trials, are denied.
- One billion people are unemployed or underemployed.
- Two hundred and fifty million children are involved in child labour.
- Women work two thirds of the world's working hours and produce one half of the

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world's food, yet earn only ten per cent of the world's income and own less than one per cent of the world's property and make up seventy per cent of those in absolute poverty.

- Three billion people exist on less than two dollars a day.
- Eight hundred million lack access to even basic medical care.
- Seventeen million, including eleven million children, die each year from easily preventable diseases.
- Eight hundred million people are hungry or mal-nourished.
- eleven million die yearly from hunger and malnutrition.
- Eight hundred and seventy million of the world's adults are illiterate.
- The richest one percent earn as much as the poorest fifty-seven per cent.
- The top five per cent earn as much as the bottom eighty per cent.
- The wealthiest one fifth of the world's population earns seventy-five times that of the poorest fifth.
- Regarding the environment, we are experiencing rapid deforestation, large-scale species extinction, desertification and land degradation, polluted land, sea, and air, and global warming, which will accelerate the above and add flooding and natural disasters unprecedented scale.

All of the above is entirely preventable. The Socialist Party of Canada holds that it is the profit system that is responsible. In the capitalist mode of production, commodities are produced with a view to making a profit. For this to take

place, the goods must be sold and a profit made. If this does not happen, production must stop, factories close, and workers laid off. Only those who can pay can have access to the goods. Starving people do not have money for food and therefore have no access to it.

If an alien craft were to land on earth, they would not be able to comprehend this situation. The sheer scale of the unnecessary destruction, devastation, and human misery is almost incomprehensible. It can only be matched by the apparent willingness to ignore it or excuse it by the vast majority of the world's citizens.

Now you know why we must act. Now comes the hard part. What to do? First, take stock of the situation. Secondly, identify the cause and solution. If, as we claim, the problems are caused by the private ownership of the means of production by a tiny minority who control and run the system in their own interest, then that ownership must change. We are saying that the resources and bounties of the earth should belong to everyone and should be operated in their interest so no one will ever be deprived of the necessities of life. Is there any argument against this concept? We don't think so.

The hard part is that only the non-owners (you) can bring this about. Electing a leader and his party every few years won't cut it. They are forced by the institutions and conventions in place to operate this system we are in now, no matter what their personal choices may be. How many different leaders and their parties have you elected so far in your lifetime? Have they solved any of the problems mentioned above? Of course not. It is up to you to act in the interests of the non-owning class and bring about the social revolution that is necessary to anything for a better world. Now you know why and how to act.

**The time is now!**

## National Ownership or Common Ownership?

*J. Ayers*

**M**el Watkins is a research associate at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, a left wing think tank based in Ottawa. He is also professor emeritus at the University of Toronto, and an adjunct professor at Carleton University. His specialty is economics and he is well known for a 1968 report on foreign ownership of Canadian companies. Evidently, he has stuck with this theme for forty years, as his recent article, "Enough With Foreign Ownership" (*Toronto Star*, 03/02/2008) attests.

His thesis is that foreign ownership is bad for Canada and substituting more Canadian ownership will give us more control over our economic destiny. He takes the current Conservative government to task for creating The Competition Policy Review Panel too late to repair the damage. Watkins is disappointed that the Panel found that Canadian business interests want less restrictions on buying, selling, merging and taking over companies, not more. He goes on to point the finger at the sub-prime mortgage crisis and the resulting market turmoil as evidence of the chaos of the global market from which more Canadian ownership will insulate us. Surely Watkins is aware that the nature of capitalist production and its market are anarchic and chaotic at any time.

In the same vein, David Olive wrote in his article "A Lament for A Nation of Sellouts" (*Toronto Star*, 24/02/08), "What hope is there for Canada to be anything but a second tier, resource-dependent, player on the global stage if every time a corporation approaches critical mass, it gets sold off to a foreign buyer?" *Continued on page...6*

# The Long Commute to Nowhere

One of the many problems caused by the capitalist mode of production is the long journey to work for many workers, which itself creates more problems. The "Toronto Star" of December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007, focused on the plight of Lori Forrester, a 42 year old accountant and mother of two young children, who daily commutes 240 miles. Forrester leaves her home in Berryville, Virginia at 7:30 am and arrives at her workplace at shortly after 9:00am. She comments, "It's like I spend all my time at work and on the road."

Forrester's husband leaves for work at 3:30am. The long commutes and early rising leave the Forresters with three hours a day for family time. Aside from the cost of gas and car maintenance, they also pay someone \$225 a week to clean their house because they don't have the time to do it themselves. As for the family's evening meal, it's a choice between McDonalds and Taco Bell.

It used to take this writer two hours to get from his home in Mississauga, Ontario, to his job in Toronto. This was by car, commuter train, and walking. When weather ruled out walking, then a subway and streetcar substituted. According to Tim Harper, the Star's man in Washington, "The American commute starts earlier, lasts longer, wastes more time and money, and further endangers physical and psychological health each year." Nor is this a specifically North American problem. Soaring house prices in most of the industrialized countries have caused many workers in cities to live out of town and commute. Not all places of employment are accessible by train or bus, leaving the car as the only option, and thereby

clogging the highways and roads and contributing to global warming. The craziness of it all is that many buy cars to get to work and use up a fair chunk of their wage in paying the car loan, gas, parking, and maintenance. But then whoever said capitalism was sane? According to the following sources, The Texas Transportation Institute, The US census, The New England Journal

England, exacerbated by growing suburbs, are well documented. Mayor Livingstone's imposition of a \$16 a day charge on fossil fuel vehicles entering central London has projected subway ridership to reach 1.5 billion in the coming years. This clearly shows that in attempting to solve problems within capitalism, new problems appear and old ones can be exacerbated.



of Medicine, and The UN, the following statistics present a harrowing picture. The cost per year in wasted fuel, and lost work due to road congestion is \$78 billion. The amount of time drivers spend stuck in traffic each year is 60 hours per driver in the Washington area, and 37 hours is the national average, compared to just 14 hours 25 years ago. Total hours for Americans stuck in traffic for 2005 was 4.2 billion!

The Star continued in this vein by focusing on the travel problems in other cities. The traffic problems of London,

Now that China is emerging as a major industrialized power, it can be expected to experience the same problems. Already three million cars clog the main streets with one thousand more appearing every day. China's rapidly growing economy and rising incomes have made it the fastest growing car market in the world. Last years, car sales rose 26% and this trend is expected to continue. The total car ownership in China is expected to eclipse that of the US by 2025. Closer to home, Michael Barrett, who commutes from his home in Oshawa to

his job in Mississauga says, "I will leave in the dark, come home in the dark, and I'm always in the dark about what's going on in the family. Barrett, a father of six, drives 150 kilometers each day, and when he recently introduced himself to another parent at his daughter's swim practice, she was surprised to hear that his wife was not a single parent. Another parent, Jennifer Case, commutes 90 minutes, loves living in the country and is not interested in car pooling or taking three buses. "I do worry about my impact on the environment. I can't afford one of those lovely \$60 000 hybrid cars." Case leases a car for \$300 a month, spends another \$300 on gas, and \$100 on insurance, "Half my pay goes to commuting costs.

The reform minded "Toronto Star", of course, can only see improvements made within capitalism. It mentions congestion fees in London, Stockholm, and Singapore, but also mentions that the decline has only been 22%. It also mentions Denmark, which seems to have dealt with the problem well by increasing vehicle registration costs by 180% and a 25% value added tax. This has forced many commuters to use bicycles who have their own lanes, parking, and signals. Bicycles, however, are hardly feasible in North American winters and distances. The Star concludes, "...either we kill the commute, or it will kill us."

The long commuting distances, by whatever method, trigger problems such as environmental damage, resource waste, monetary cost, family disruption, mental and physical stress.

In a society where human needs are the only priority, this problem would not exist. Once socialism is established, its first task would be to eradicate the mess capitalism has left behind. This would involve a positive social revolution. Cities, as they exist now, or even automobiles, may not be needed. Work would have a different meaning,

as it would become voluntary, not a compulsory five days out of seven drudge.

Control over one's work and over the very nature of production would likely result in one's societal contribution being close to home negating the mad world of rising in the middle of the night to race to make far away deadlines and unnecessarily consuming valuable energy and resources.

Establishment of a socialist society would restore sanity to the work and commuting world.

## Honesty is the Worst policy

*S.Shannon*

As you are all aware, the American economy is taking a pounding and, given the global nature of the market, the world economy is following suit. As Dick Bryan, professor of economics at the University of Sydney, said, "In this globalized world, a problem in one location is a problem everywhere." The cause is the result of the American sub-prime mortgage crisis that exacerbated an already weakening US economy, real estate agents, money lenders, and mortgage brokers excepted. The problem was that the real estate boom was based on artificially low interest rates. When they rose to the going level, homeowners had difficulty with the payments and walked away from, or lost, their homes.

American banks, holding vast amounts in sub-prime mortgages on their books, decided to sell off the debt. Who would buy them if advertised honestly? The answer was to bundle the debt into packages using complex computer models. Then, they were able to convince the rating agencies such as Moody's and the Orwellian-named Standard and Poor's to give the mortgage securities an artificially

higher rating. Later, it became known that these agencies, on which foreign investors rely for impartial advice, were being paid by the banks selling the mortgages. This revelation prompted investors to move their money out of the US mortgage market, thus creating a panic.

In Germany, the government had to save two banks from failing. In France, BNP Paribas, one of the country's largest banks, had to suspend redemptions from three of its investment funds. In Britain, Northern Rock PLC, the country's fifth largest mortgage lender, had a run on funds as investors lined up for their money. What is amazingly hypocritical is the reaction from the politicians and economic experts in defence of the system. French President, Sarkozy, who has vowed to 'moralize financial capital', called for a rule book to avoid global crisis. (*Tribune*, 28 August 2007). Peter Bofinger, an economic adviser to the German government, said, "We need an international approach and the US needs to be part of it." (*New York Times*, 29 August 2007). Economic analyst Jim Willie said, "The entire world is growing in its disgust for having been defrauded." (*321gold.com*). *Cont. on next page*

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Hamid Varzi, economic expert, summarized it for most people, "The US economy, once the envy of the world, is now viewed across the globe with suspicion." (*International Herald Tribune*, 17 August 2007). A socialist would wonder what all the fuss was about since it's all part of the normal function of the capitalist system. A capitalist apologist might claim that it is an aberration, a result of blatant despicable dishonesty. They would never admit that dishonesty is a normal operating condition like wars and conflicts, famines, genocides, want, and poverty. In fact, dishonesty is found throughout the current system.

Do politicians, all of whom stand for capitalism, come out and state this? Are advertisers honest when selling their products? During times of war, are we told we are defending the system that makes the few rich at the expense of the many, i.e., defending the right of the rich to be rich? Of course not, for, if they did, workers would stay home and let the capitalists fight their own wars. Some lies are to split the working class, to divide and conquer. Promoting racism is one way. Immigrants are blamed for unemployment although statistics show that mass migration causes greater economic activity and jobs. It's the reason that Canada accepts large numbers of immigrants annually.

Jews have often been blamed for world problems and their presence in banking and finance cited, yet, only a tiny percentage of the directors of the world's banks are Jews. Blacks blame whites and vice versa. The worse conditions become, the more scapegoats are sought to deflect scrutiny of the real problem, private ownership of the means of producing and distributing wealth.

The greatest lie of all is that capitalism is the best possible system. Anyone can clearly see that the world

is in a mess. War, conflict, crime, poverty, starvation, want, are all accepted as part of daily life, but those who believe in capitalism tell us that a socialist society would create chaos! If any party, or its representative, were to say, "Vote for us, and we will look after the interests of the wealthy at the expense of the poor", who would vote for them? But, in reality, that's what happens. The Conservative, Liberal, Green, NDP, and even the so-called Communist Parties stand for capitalism. They may run it in various ways, but, because they do not put forward an alternative system and insist on trying to make the present system work in the interests of all, an impossibility, they are not being honest. This does not mean that you can search for the truth on the field of political combat and never find it.

The Socialist Party of Canada has no reason to lie. We have stuck to our platform for over 100 years, i.e., the establishment of a socialist society. We do not ask you to vote for us because of what we can do for you, but we can show you how to bring about that society yourselves. We will not do or say anything to get your vote. In fact, we are the only party to say, "Do not vote for us", unless you understand and want socialism. When sufficient people do understand the concept of socialism and act to create it, then we will be able to put an end to the ills that plague us today. Study our case!

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## Free Trade or Free World?

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S.Shannon

" Since launching her campaign for the White House, Democratic front runner, Hilary Clinton, has discovered 'serious short comings' with a signature achievement of her husband's

presidency-the North American Free Trade Agreement with Canada and Mexico", claims Luiza Savage in "Macleans" magazine, 17 December 2007. To quote Clinton, " NAFTA and the way it's been implemented has hurt a lot of American workers." she told the union organization, AFL-CIO, in August. This has been the labour criticism since the beginning.

Is Hilary courting the union vote? No doubt. To another audience in June she complained that factories were moving to Mexico and promised to declare a 'time-out', if elected, on the signing of new trade agreements and pledged to set up a five-year review of existing agreements beginning with NAFTA. Clinton did indeed do a study in 2006 on NAFTA, but, rather than deal with the plight of the unemployed, it focused on improving access to Canadian markets for New York State agricultural products. Senator Clinton wrote," The Canadian government must address these costly and time-consuming barriers to trade with New York which are unfairly disadvantaging New York producers." Even if Clinton were well meaning, little of her good intentions would take effect. Should she order an investigation into trade agreements, it would be undertaken by a government agency called the International Trade Commission. It examines trade law violations and makes statements such as, "There is a reasonable indication that a US industry is materially injured by reason of imports of Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) film, sheet, and strip from Brazil and elsewhere that are allegedly sold in the United States at less than fair value." (*Macleans*, 17 December 2007). In other words, would an agency that is set up to look after the interests of the capitalists conclude that NAFTA is bad for the workers?

*Continued on page 7*

# National Ownership or Common Ownership *continued...*

He goes on to complain that the rest of the world is cravenly protectionist, despite what they may espouse, while we are playing the global competition game with noble rules. As he points out, this is a system based on lying and cheating and it behooves the Canadian capitalist class to do the same to compete, which I am sure they are doing to the best of their ability. The two articles, as far as socialists are concerned, are typical of the mindless fodder that makes up the science of economics. So-called experts in this

of the working class. They don't own Canadian firms any more than they own Chinese or Chilean ones. They simply sell their only commodity, labour-power, to whoever will buy it in order to survive. While the Canadian capitalist class and its supporter, the government, exhort the worker to be patriotic, work hard, reduce wage and benefit demands to keep the company "competitive", and even, in times of war, risk their lives, the company shows no loyalty whatsoever in return. Just like any other capitalist enterprise, if an opportunity to increase profit and margins appears elsewhere in the world, then they are forced to take advantage of it and will have no compunction about closing down Canadian operations and laying off Canadian workers. Do Canadian firms keep a full staff in employment in times of reduced production, or do they, like all the rest, reduce their wage bill by showing workers to the door? The

answer is obvious and the evidence all around us as our manufacturing sector continues to shrink and the jobs literally 'go south'. The world is not producing fewer commodities, it's just that it is more profitable to produce them elsewhere. This is the normal operation of the capitalist mode of production, and nationalizing industries, as Watkins suggests, will make not one iota of difference to the worker who will continue to be a wage labourer whose surplus value is appropriated, and continue to work at the whim of capital, "...state ownership does not do away with the capitalist nature of the productive forces." (*Engels in "Anti-Duhring"*). It is doubtful whether there is such a thing as a Canadian company of any size as all enterprises are owned by blocks of capital that can originate anywhere in the world. Banking and telecommunications are somewhat

regulated but it is anything goes for the rest as far as attracting capital goes. Watkins thinks this type of regulation should be expanded to protect us from the vagaries of the market, but the mess that The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce got into through dabbling in the sub-prime mortgage debacle (it reported a loss of \$1.4 billion for the latest quarter and could lose as much as \$5 billion overall) proves that they are global players by necessity and can be global losers despite an army of 'economists' government regulations. In addition, Nortel recently announced the elimination of 2 100 jobs which continues a trend over the last few years that has seen their global workforce drop from 100 000 to about 30 000. Obviously, regulated companies are subject to the same forces and produce the same reactions as non-regulated companies. All of this has no effect on the Canadian worker, who, if he is lucky, may own the title to a tiny plot of land on which to live, together with a hefty mortgage for a few decades that he hopes to pay off in time for retirement. This is why we say that workers have no countries. They are simply part of a world-wide class that produces everything that is exploited by a world-wide parasitic capitalist class. Country has nothing to do with this process and is simply a symptom of the private property system. Only when a system of common ownership of the world's resources and productive powers by the whole of humanity is implemented will the vast majority of us have any interest or influence over what is produced and for whom. At that time we will not need economists, politicians, or nationalism to figure it out for us.



field fail to look at the whole picture and the dynamics involved through ignorance, lack of interest, or to deliberately mislead the public. Rather they search for remedies within the capitalist system that has caused the problem in the first place. Capitalism began as small enterprises operating in mainly local markets. As capital accumulation and competition grew, enterprises spread their wings in search of more markets and became regional, national and international in scope. A great way to eliminate competition and increase operating capital was the merger or take over. This process, as Marx pointed out, is a natural consequence of capitalist production. It is not an option to remain local or national. The mantra is grow or be gobbled up. Secondly, the whole concept of nationalism of company ownership has no bearing whatsoever on the fortunes

# Free Trade or Free World?

*Continued from page 5*

It would be very hard using any of their economic techniques to reach that conclusion.” Said Jeffrey Scott, a senior fellow at the Petersen Institute for International Economics, a Washington think tank.

This is not to say that Clinton is totally uncaring when it comes to those who lose their jobs. She has proposed expanding a federal program that pays benefits to the unemployed if their company moves abroad or if their jobs become outsourced. Whatever Clinton wants and whatever results she may, or may not, achieve, the plain fact is that any change to any trade agreement, including abolition and/or compensation, is simply a matter of tinkering with capitalism.

All disagreements between politicians are on the business efficacy of the agreements, and any compensation for the workers is seeking answers to capitalism’s problems within the system that caused them in the first place. The fundamental aspect of NAFTA is the ability to move capital and production freely to wherever they can get the cheapest labour and the best deal, and, hence, bigger profits. In fact, Clinton made no bones about it, complaining that factories were moving to Mexico for lower labour costs and to Canada for cheaper health care costs.

The most blatant hypocrisy of all is that during wartime capitalists and politicians exhort the workers to be patriotic and fight for their country. Those who don’t fight are made to feel guilty. The results of NAFTA are such that we can clearly see that capitalists do not live up to their own phony standards. You may ask how one could change this in our present day society. The answer is that you can’t. The very

nature of capitalist production with the minority owning the tools of production and the majority working for wages, is such that the problems it creates cannot be solved within it. They are natural consequences of the operation of the system. Some very well intentioned people have been trying for a long time and we are still faced with the same problems we have had from the beginning. The capitalist must make a profit or go out of business. Hence his need to keep labour costs down. The worker, in his need to pay for rent, groceries, clothing, utilities, etc., needs higher wages. Thus, in wage labour, appears the class struggle over the surplus product produced by the labour of the workers.

One thing about NAFTA that should be evident to everyone is that the worker has no country. There may be emotional attachments to, and a genuine like of the area in which one lives. That is normal, but a country as a political entity is but a means whereby some live well at the expense of others. It is not the workers who own their own country and the law protects those who do.

All that can be easily changed through political organization acting consciously for a socialist society in which trade agreements, unemployment, and outsourcing are things of the past and security of food and necessary goods a thing of the present. Whatever you may think of this analysis, why not study the case for socialism? You have nothing to lose but your chains!

## Tales from The Class War

*Eds.*

There are those people who believe that social classes have disappeared in recent decades, that social mobility is available to

anyone willing to work hard, that the word class as a social division is no longer relevant. They are wrong. They are influenced by the capitalist propaganda and so-called economists trained in compiling and spinning statistics to try to explain the vagaries of the market. A large downturn is called a ‘correction’ rather than a recession, no matter that hundreds of thousands of workers lose their livelihoods until the market ‘rights’ itself. They are capitalist apologists and cheerleaders whose job it is to paint a rosy picture and soften the blows suffered by workers at the hands of capitalism. The bourgeois revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries firmly established the rising capitalist class as the dominant force as commodity production and wage labour took hold. The defeated aristocracy were faced with joining in the system as capitalists or become extinct. Just two classes were left, the capitalist class that owns the resources, the factories, the land, and the workers who operate the system but do not own any of it, not even the product, which is appropriated by the capitalist. Karl Marx wrote, “Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinct feature: it has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat.” (Communist Manifesto). Class society and the antagonisms therein arise from the ownership of the means of producing and distributing wealth by the capitalist class. The worker is forced to sell his mental and physical powers in order to survive. His surplus value, the hours in excess of those necessary to produce the value of his wage, and therefore worked unpaid, form the source of profit for the owner. The worker has a job only so long as a profit is realized from his labour. The hours and conditions of work, the pay, the production decisions, are all made by the employer. These antagonisms must exist no matter how personable the owner may be, no matter where you work, factory or office, and will, sooner or later, lead to conflict.



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### WSM Companion Parties

The Socialist Party of Canada is just one member of a world-wide association of socialist parties known as the World Socialist Movement:

**World Socialist Party of Australia**  
P.O. Box 1266  
North Richmond  
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**Socialist Party of Great Britain**  
52 Clapham High Street,  
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**World Socialist Party (New Zealand)**  
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**World Socialist Party of the United States**  
P.O. Box 440247  
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wspusa@worldsocialism.org  
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### Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of society as a whole.

### Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Canada holds:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into an agent of emancipation and the overthrow of plutocratic privilege.
7. That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interest of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
8. The Socialist Party of Canada, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to support these principles to the end that a termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

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# IMAGINE



OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA

## WAR IN GAZA

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are You On?



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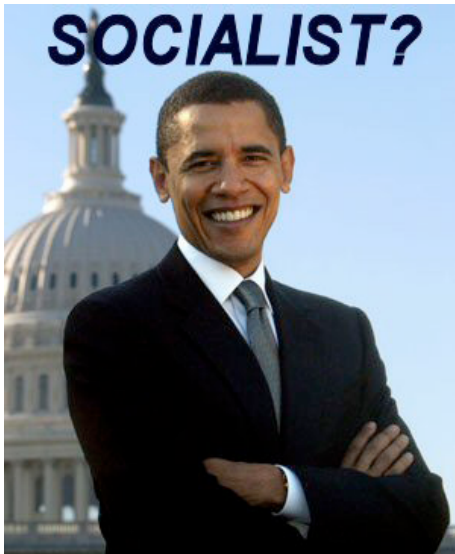


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# Political Fear Mongering *and the Stigma of Socialism*



M. CROSSMAN

If you have been in the dark lately, an election recently occurred in the United States. Election time in the U.S. guarantees mudslinging and scandals. Socialism is now being dragged through the mud, having being thrown around during the election race like a deadly weapon. True socialism has been tarnished by previous historical events, and the Presidential candidates perpetuated the misunderstanding of scientific socialism. "A vote for Obama is a vote for Socialism" was plastered on a billboard in Pennsylvania on October 31, 2008. Barack Obama, now President elect, has been branded as a socialist because of a statement made regarding taxes. In a discussion with a man termed "Joe the Plumber" Barack Obama stated that the distribution of wealth was part of his agenda. Obama was quoted as saying "when you spread the wealth around, it's good for everybody." John McCain and Sarah Palin, the candidates for the Republican Party have

declared that Obama's "spread the wealth" comment proves he has a socialist agenda. "Certainly it's part of the socialist creed, the socialist philosophy ... to share the wealth," McCain said. Governor Palin repeatedly used the word socialism in the context that it is a toxic programme. "Friends, now is no time to experiment with socialism," she said at a rally in Roswell, New Mexico. And McCain, discussing Obama's tax proposals, agreed that they sounded "a lot like socialism." Furthermore, Todd Akin, a Republican congressman from Missouri, told a McCain rally outside St. Louis that, "This campaign in the next couple of weeks is about one thing. It's a referendum on socialism." And yet another Senator, George Voinovich of Ohio, said of Obama, "With all due respect, the man is a socialist."

It is these broad and misunderstood statements about what socialism is that impedes the advance of a true and scientific understanding of it. Simply distributing wealth in the U.S. would not be socialism; instead it would be state capitalism. The essential features of capitalism would still remain, which are; ownership of the tools of production by a small minority with the consequent wage enslavement of the majority and production with a view to making a profit on the market. Furthermore, the government would still exist the way it does now, to sustain the status quo. What's worse is that people truly believe that wealth sharing would usher in Soviet-style socialism, which was state capitalism, since it is one of the examples of a country that labelled

itself socialist or communist. For example: 84-year-old World War II veteran John H. Gay is certain that Obama believes in the communist ideology and that "if we go the socialist way, you young people will lose all your freedoms -- mentally, physically and religiously." That is not part of true socialism in any way, but the stigma and lack of understanding on the subject impede people from considering it as a viable and practical alternative. Although Mr Gay's stigma does not reflect true socialism in any way, the likes of such "common sense" ignorance on the subject hoodwinks people from considering real socialism as a viable and practical alternative to the never ending capitalist mayhem of economic slumps, unemployment, wars, environmental destruction, and other varieties of human-made misery.

Although material conditions are often the mother of invention in building class consciousness opposing capital, socialists never cease endeavouring to educate en masse debunking the myths of capitalist apologists and mystifiers. Through persuasive argument and much hard work rational opinions and knowledge can be ascertained to truly reflect and share the ideas and scientific principles of conducting human affairs based on what real socialism is – and not what it is not. We urge you to join us in hastening this en masse education evolution for social revolution and speed the day to end capitalist oppression and all that it entails.



# The Palestinian/Israeli Conflict:

## *Who's Side are You On?*

The latest outbreak of hostilities in the Middle East has brought predictable results – condemnation of the brutal way in which Israel has used its military might (900 dead and 4 000 injured, many women and children); support for Israel by most Western governments, especially Britain and the US; inaction by the UN as any resolution is easily vetoed by the five permanent members of the Security Council, who just happen also to be the world's main purveyors of armaments. Israel has invaded Palestinian territory ostensibly to stop the continual firing of crude rockets into their land. Palestinian rockets are in response to the two-year blockade of Gaza, essentially imprisoning them and creating economic chaos and misery. Hamas, the ruling party of the Palestinians, refuses to rec-

ognize Israel's right to exist, while Israel and the US have declared Hamas, a democratically elected government, verified by international observers, to be a terrorist organization. But the roots of the conflict go much deeper than that. The establishment of the state of Israel after WW II was carried out at the behest of the US. For them, it created a modern friendly state in a strategically important region and gave them the opportunity to destabilize the area to evade facing a pan-Arab front. It has worked well. The region is in a constant state of war and conflict and Arab factions compete with each other. Jews and Arabs lived peaceably in the area for thousands of years, but when the Israeli state boundaries were drawn and enforced, many Palestinians had to move from territories they had oc-

cupied for generations. It was a recipe for disaster and the West has seen to it that this situation will continue forever. The modern state, with clearly defined boundaries, a central government complete with its apparatus for 'defence' and for propaganda, the education system and the media, is necessary to the operation of the class system that is capitalism. That there is conflict as rival states compete for economic hegemony is no surprise to the socialist, as this is a natural consequence of the operation of the system. The supposed solution to the problem, the creation of a Palestinian state, would simply create a formally organised capitalist unit, complete with a dominant owning class and an exploited working class. Like all other states, it would operate in the interests of profit, not in the interests



of the people. Furthermore, it would necessarily be in direct competition with all other states, including Israel, for resources, land, and trade. In other words, the conflict would continue as long as the competitive profit system exists. So whose side do we take? The Socialist Party of Canada and its companion parties around the world were first confronted with this question as the First World War began. Using Marxian theory, its own Declaration of Principles, and analytical common sense, The SPC produced a war manifesto on August 6th, 1914. In its "Manifesto to the Workers of Canada", it stated that modern wars have their origin in the disputes between the international capitalist class and have no interest for the working class; that it will be the workers who will be expected to fight and die for their capitalists' cause and benefit; that since the international working class produces all the world's wealth yet possesses nothing and receives but paltry wages to maintain a slavish existence, while the capitalist class produces nothing and possesses everything by virtue of the powers of the state, then the only struggle of interest to the workers is wresting this power from the master class to remove all forms of exploitation and servitude. (see "The Impossibilists; A Brief History of The Socialist Party of Canada", by Peter E. Newell, Athena Press). This stance has been upheld continuously since that time by all parties of The World Socialist Move-

ment in the face of the seemingly endless wars that afflict the profit system. In the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, then, we equally condemn the invasion of Gaza by the vastly superior forces of Israel and its blockade that causes



hardship to the Palestinians, and the indiscriminate rocket attacks and the tactic of sending in suicide bombers, some just children, to kill and maim a few Israeli workers. The SPC supports the workers of both sides in their struggle to throw off the yoke of capitalist oppression, legitimized and enforced by the state machinery and operated by so-called leaders who pretend to guard the interests of the people while operating a system of exploitation.

Only when the working class as a whole comes to realize that we are in the majority and that we have the same interests, no matter where we live, and that we have the power to make the fundamental changes needed to end all conflict, will the Middle Eastern problem, and others around the world, be solved. This, and other, conflicts will continue so long as the present competitive system of private ownership by the minority continues. Only when the people are able to elect representatives, not leaders, who are charged with carrying out their wishes, and are daily responsible for that task, will peace be possible. Only when private ownership of the means of producing and distributing wealth become collective and states, classes, money, profit, wages disappear, will the reasons for war also disappear.

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## Mankind as a Commodity

*J. HODGINS*

**H**uman beings are commodified through the selling and buying of their labour power. A commodity appears simply as something with a threefold value i.e, a use-value, an exchange value and a price. What implications does this have in regards to the commodification of human labour power? It would appear as though the purchase of our labour power would indeed be the essence of enslavement, slavery being defined in terms "as one being compelled to work for others, and the surrender of the product of they're labour". The term wage-slavery would be an appropriate definition for the monetary exchange of human labour. The commodified human being

does not have any claim over the wealth that they produce. While, unlike the slaves of yesterday, the wage-slave is not compelled to work for any given master, he nonetheless must work for a master, for his very livelihood depends upon this monetary exchange. The Capitalist neither purchases his worker, nor does he own them. The capitalist merely purchases from them their labour power, the workers physical energy, for a certain period of time. The worker represents to him merely a machine capable of expending a certain amount of labour power. When the capitalist does not need any more labour power, he simply refrains from purchasing any. This occurrence is quite a common thing, as we have recently seen in the layoffs in the various sectors of industry. The layoff is an overt example of the cessation of exchange that exists between workers and capitalist, it is merely a circumstance of supply and demand.

It is clear that mankind's livelihood is directly related to the production we are involved in. In all aspects of social history this has remained true. It is the relationship that the worker's holds in relation to labour that has transformed throughout the ages. Where once the worker laboured in a state of serfdom, he now labours in the state of wage-dom. The future of this relationship will not remain unchanged. The Socialist Party of Canada puts forth the case for a radical transformation of the workers relationship towards the means of producing wealth. The socialist advocates the common ownership of the wealth of mankind's labour, and the abolishment of the commodification of humanity. It is only when the working class as a whole stands in an equal ownership towards the means of producing and distributing wealth that this exploitation will end. To that end we encourage the entire working class to study our case, and to bring forth the next age of mankind.

## What's in a Price? *J. HODGINS*

In the Capitalist mode of production the creation and distribution of commodities and goods take form in the shape of prices. The rise and decline in prices can be attributed to many varying factors. Production of a single commodity does not occur within a vacuum, rather many different aspects and circumstances go into the production of a product that are out of the hands of the workers that produce them. Let's for example use the automobile as an illustration of this. An automobile takes its final form as a finished product in the shape of a price, lets say \$40 000. If you break apart the process by which the production of an automobile occurs you find that hundreds of different forms of labour were involved in its final form. A car is composed of thousands of different mechanical parts, the majority of which are produced in different factories by different workers. We can deduce even further that the production of a single mechanical part in the car has many different aspects of labour involved with its production. The worker who labours at the mine in northern Ontario producing steel derivatives is as much

involved in the process of automobile production as the worker that assembles the finishing pieces of a single car. The same can be said for the truck driver who transports the raw material from the mine to the processing plant to be further refined into industrial grade steel. Even more so we can lump into this process the farmer, who by their production of food allows individual workers in this chain the sustenance required to be a productive producer. We can see then, that the \$40 000 dollar price tag is not some arbitrary number created out of thin air by money crazed capitalists. The final price is the amalgamation of all other forms of labour value that goes into the production of a single product for sale on the market.

Neither are the wages that we receive just an arbitrary number created by our employers. A wage takes its form in the shape of a sale and purchase. The sale is brought forth by the worker, who confronts the market with his only true possession, that of his mind and muscle. The purchase occurs on the side of the owner who buys from the worker his time and labour. Wages are

calculated by the cost of the goods and services a worker needs to consume in order to continue being a productive worker, this being the necessary things a human needs in order to live and support a family. Simply put, the price of labour is what constitutes a wage. The labour a worker expends during production adds value to the thing the worker is producing. It is this factor that creates what is called 'surplus-value' i.e. profit. It can then be considered that the worker, throughout one portion of the day works to produce the equivalent value of their wage, and in another portion of the day works to create profit for the capitalist. The wage a worker receives must always be less than the value of what they produce, otherwise there is no profit to be made, and production will cease. Profit is merely the value created by the worker above and beyond the cost of the wage; it can be considered that profit is the equivalent of unpaid labour. Consider this next time you are in your workplace, for most of your working day you are essentially working for free.





As soon as the world credit crisis burst on the scene, capitalists, politicians, and soothsayers put global warming on the back burner. Even before the economic crisis, the deforestation aspects of global warming were already low on the radar which is ludicrous to anyone concerned with preventing the environmental catastrophe into which capitalism is rushing headlong. Forests were left out of the original Kyoto agreement and out of the carbon markets proposed in The International Panel of Climate Change Report of 2007. Yet, they contain fifty per cent of life on earth while covering less than seven per cent of the earth's surface, and they are responsible for most of the rainfall on this planet. To an extent, they determine the earth's temperature by forming a cooling belt around the equator. According to Rodney Castleden in his "Discoveries that Changed the World" (Futura, 2008), "The rate of destruction of the tropical rainforests became a major cause of concern in the 1980s. Sud-

denly, environmentalists and the general public all over the world became aware that the forests were being lost at such a fast rate, that, in as little as a generation, there might be no rainforest left at all." Nearly two decades have gone by since that time and they are becoming increasingly smaller, through over exploitation, in the name of profit, for timber, agricultural land, mineral resources and cattle ranching. Commercial logging, which is a major contributor to deforestation, provides pulp for paper and cardboard for the major industrialized countries. Approximately fifty per cent of the world's timber and seventy-five per cent of the world's paper is consumed by a quarter of its population, mostly in the US, Europe, and Japan. Though some forest is cleared for local food production, much is cleared for cattle ranching. Beef cattle are raised for the US fast food industry. Every burger eaten represents the clearing of fifty square feet of rainforest. Powerful, multi-national companies are also in-

volved, whether it is logging, oil and mineral mining, or power generation. Their power schemes have resulted in vast flooded areas of rainforest. In addition, as they move their employees in, they destroy more forest with highway, railway and settlement building. The forests used to be an enormous water reservoir but clearing reduces this amount through increased evaporation. The risk exists that the forests could become deserts. What is now the Sahara desert was once a forested area, brought about natural climate change. Imagine what is now possible with man's helping hand! In 1992, The Food and Agricultural Organization (FOA) estimated that, globally, tropical rainforests were being lost at the rate of 65 000 square miles a year. The World Resources Institute disagreed and said it was 70 000square miles. In 2007 it was discovered that deforestation has created huge volumes of carbon dioxide by destroying much of the cooling belt around the equator. The Stern Report



on climate change estimated that deforestation produces twenty-five per cent of the greenhouse gases that are responsible for global warming. By focusing on the direct production of carbon dioxide emissions, politicians are turning a blind eye to deforestation. The Stern Report also comments, "... that the destruction of the tropical forest during the four years 2008 to 2011 alone is set to pump more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than every flight in the history of aviation until at least 2025." According to Castleden, "Another environmental report has stated bleakly 'If we lose the forests, we lose the fight against climate change.' The people most directly affected are the 1.6 billion of the world's poorest people who live in or near the rain

forests, and get their living from them. Poorly armed, educated, and organized, they are no match for the governments who force them off their land or for the multi-nationals who take it from them. What can be done within capitalism to save the rainforests? It would seem precious little, considering it isn't high on any politician's agenda, including those who are fighting a losing battle against global warming in general. The reason the forests are being destroyed can be summed up in one word, profit. Whether it is wood and paper products, food products, mining, or energy projects, it all means the same thing – commodities that can be sold for profit. Nor can anyone expect any capitalist enterprise to consider long-term consequences. A profit must be made quickly for them to

remain in business. Though profit may be the very lifeblood of the capitalist system, it is also a destructive force, whether it be the deaths of members of the working class in wars, or, in this case, destruction of the environment. Some may well ask if the members of a socialist society wouldn't need the products that capitalism is plundering the world to produce. We most certainly would need those things that are essential to our modern world, but production and production techniques would be devised that wouldn't include the blatant rape and devastation of our natural world. The vast majority would, through elected representatives, ascertain needs, materials, clean methods of production and distribution, and fuel that minimizes or eliminates damage

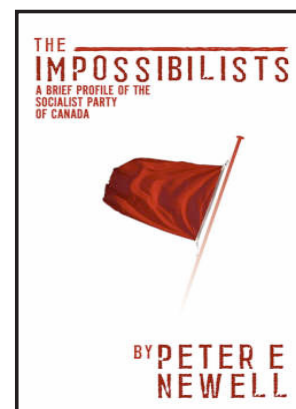
to our environment. The first citizens of a socialist world will be confronted with the mess that capitalism has made of this planet. They will have to reclaim the forests, irrigate the deserts, and clean the air, land, and waters. With present day technology and future innovations and discoveries, they will probably succeed. Then a world will exist where humankind can live in harmony with nature. Who would not want such a world? So why not organize politically to speed the day.



# Book Review

## The Impossibilists – A Brief History of The Socialist Party of Canada

By Peter E. Newell, Athena Press, UK, 2008.



S. SHANNON

In writing his highly informative and readable history, Newell has accomplished something that biographers of The Socialist Party of Great Britain (of which Newell is a member) have failed to achieve in one volume. Newell describes, in detail, the events and controversies that have occurred in the SPC's history and captures the spirit and flair of the colourful personalities that played a conspicuous part in its history. Readers will consider themselves fortunate that the author persevered over a long period to complete this work.

Though the title includes the word brief, absorbing the voluminous information contained in the 400 pages and six appendices, it's hard to think of it as such. Marxist activity, as opposed to Reformist and Christian socialism began in Canada, mostly in the Western provinces, around 1900. Many were British working people who (like the founders of SPGB) had been members of the Social Democratic Federation, but had quit, disillusioned and disgusted because it had become increasingly reformist. Several parties claiming to be socialist were founded, two of which deserve mention here. The Revolutionary Party was formed in late 1901 or early 1902. They contested a by-election in Nanaimo, BC, in December, 1902. Their platform was the abolition of capitalism and the wages system, not immediate demands or reforms. Interestingly, Newell claims this was the

world's first completely revolutionary Socialist Party. In 1901, the Socialist Party of British Columbia was formed in Vancouver, which was a mixture of revolutionaries and reformers. By January, 1903, the former had sufficient power to suggest (probably for the first time) that in elections, where there were no socialist candidates, workers should write 'Socialism' on their ballot papers. In February, 1905, the above parties and various others throughout Canada, merged to form the SPC. In the early days, the bulk of the membership and its most active ones, were in British Columbia. The most influential members advocated the need to educate workers 'to their class interests and demand the collective ownership of the means of production.'

Newell quoted another biographer, Ross McCormack, "By refusing to demand reforms in its platform, the SPC became unique in North America." An outstanding early member was Eugene Kingsley, as a speaker, organizer, and writer, who, when asked about reforms, declared, "Go after the earth and the first thing you know, you will have palliatives galore from the cowardly capitalist tribe, fleeing for their lives, from the wrath to come." Another early member was Jim Pritchard, an immigrant from the UK, who had, for a time, worked in Manchester at the Ermen and Engels Textile Mill. Pritchard had led the drive to organize coal min-

ers on Vancouver Island into the Western Federation of Miners, where he worked as a miner. In 1903, he was blacklisted and he moved to the city of Vancouver. He died in 1952, aged 90 and still a member of the SPC. However impressive the above may seem, the plain fact was that there were reformers among the members who would eventually create discord. In 1911, various groups of reformists left to form the Social Democratic Party of Canada, leaving the SPC at a very low ebb.

Newell recounts some of the SPC's achievements, which are quite an eye-opener, even for present-day members. On August 6th, 1914, two days after Britain declared war on Germany, the SPC drew up an anti-war manifesto that was published in the Western Clarion on August 15th. Its most significant paragraph being, "inasmuch as all modern wars have their origins in the disputes of the international capitalist class for markets in which to dispose of the stolen products of labour, or to protect themselves in the possession of markets they already have, the motive of the anticipated struggle in Europe is of no real interest to the international working class." This was published ten days before the SPGB's own anti-war statement. In May, 1917, three months after the Russian czar's abdication and six months before the Bolshevik coup, the Western Clarion included what



may be the first correct analysis by a Marxist party on the events in Russia "...although events in Russia were encouraging in that they were moving the proletariat towards emancipation, the historical juncture for the co-operative commonwealth had not arrived."

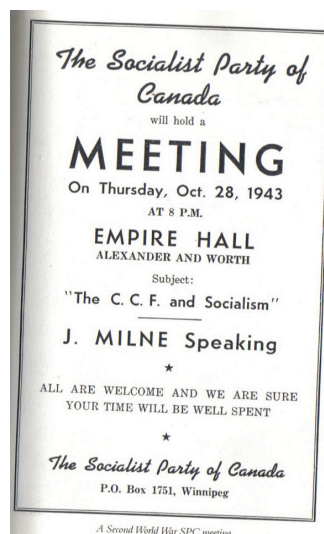
Among the companion parties of socialism, the SPC alone has had some electoral success. Between 1905 and 1920, five candidates were elected (two of them twice) to the provincial parliaments in British Columbia, Alberta, and Manitoba. It must, though, be honestly said that the majority of votes cast were both on a Labour Union and Reformist basis. Newell gives details of the differing attitudes among members towards unions, including IWW, which has not resolved itself today. The Winnipeg strike of 1919, was not organized by SPC, nor was socialism an issue. Nevertheless, SPC members were involved, including strike committee members George Armstrong, Dick Johns, and Bob Russell, all of whom served prison terms for their involvement. Bill Pritchard, the son of the previously mentioned Jim, was not on the committee, but was jailed anyway for his involvement.

Newell devotes an entire chapter to the strike, which (like the rest of the book) is absorbing reading. As an aside, this reviewer would like to add that at the "Museum of Man" in Gatineau, Quebec (across the river from Ottawa) there is an exhibit devoted to the strike. It includes an exact replica of the Strike H.Q., the literature of the time, such as The Western Labour News and life-sized cardboard cutouts of some of the leading personalities involved such as Helen Armstrong, wife of George, herself an SPC member and member of the strike committee.

The Bolshevik seizure of power had a devastating effect on the SPC. Some

quit to join Bolshevik-style parties. Others were '...subject to the anti-red propaganda and persecution, whether they were sympathetic to the Russian upheaval or not.' In 1919, the 'One Big Union' was founded, largely by SPC members, some of which devoted more time to it than to the SPC itself..."the Canadian state closely monitored the activities of prominent members of SPC and OBU. Some of them left the country, either for a few months, or, in some cases, permanently." Some became reformists, Bill Pritchard being a perfect example. By 1933 he "was heavily involved with the newly established Cooperative Commonwealth Federation." He eventually returned to the fold in the US and, in 1969, wrote an excellent analysis of the Winnipeg strike, in commemoration of its fiftieth anniversary.

For the SPC it was too many setbacks and, in 1925, without consulting the membership, the executive dissolved the party. At no time did socialist activity by ex members cease. A number of small locals continued to function, a proletarian club was founded in Vancouver, and a science study club was founded in Winnipeg. By 1931, former members re-organized the SPC and, in 1931, accepted the SPGB's object and declaration of principles. Since then, the SPC has struggled through the depression, WWII, the cold war, the prosperity of the fifties and sixties, and subsequent recessions, constantly stating the case for socialism without compromise. Like all parties, it has had its controversies, one of which was in the 1960s. This concerned internal democracy – some Vancouver members were expelled and joined with the To-



ronto local, which resigned to form the World Socialist Party of Canada. A previous reviewer criticized Newell for devoting a whole chapter on this and, I'm told, Newell agreed. For my part, it was something that happened and the effect was terrible for a small party that could ill afford such schisms. If one is going to tell it 'warts and all',

it had to be dealt with in detail. One topic that I question, that had to be dealt with in detail, is an appendix of 15 pages devoted to Daniel De Leon and The Socialist Labour Party. Possibly, Newell didn't want any confusion concerning SPC differences with SLP. There may be some confusion when one sees De Leon's name on the back cover. This, I'm told, is the publisher's doing. Another topic that I feel has too much space is Charles Lestor. He was a colourful member, active in the twenties and thirties in Canada and Britain, whose socialist understanding was questioned by both parties. Newell sums up, "Daniel De Leon and Trotsky were, apparently Lestor's great unsung heroes." Besides De Leon, there are appendices on SPC pamphlets, an electoral history of SPC, locals after 1931, locals 1933-1939, and Canadian Socialist and Canadian Social Democratic groups and parties since 1939. "The Impossibilists" ends on a couple of high notes – the publication of a new journal, "Imagine", and the other being the final sentence, "At the time of writing, the SPC appears to have moved up a gear or two – only time will tell." "The Impossibilists" is indispensable reading for those interested in the history of the labour movement in Canada and the movement for socialism everywhere.

# Obscene and Heard

## Health

A big issue for Canadians is the preservation of our universal “free” Health care. Especially as half the 1.5 million American families that go bankrupt each year do so due to medical causes. In Canada we have creeping privatization as for profit clinics keep popping up contravening the Canada Health Act but never challenged by any level of government. These clinics are slowly stripping the health care system of doctors, nurses, other health care professionals, and resources. They charge fees that most Canadians cannot afford, such as \$13-20 000 for knee surgery.

On health, cigarette manufacturers, virtually chased out of the shrinking tobacco market in North America, have found new ones in the Third World (will it ever get to Second place?). China is the land of cheap cigarettes with ads such as, “This special product was created...as an appreciation to all women in style. Because you deserve the best” (message on packs of ‘low side stream lady’ rose flavoured cigarettes, Toronto Star, 25/10/08). Apparently it’s going well as smoking kills over a million in China every year!

## Work

In China – Toronto Star headline, “Crisis Slows China’s March to Capitalism”. Ignoring the fact that they have always been capitalist, the story tells how a business couple saw the writing on the wall for their company so they took the money and ran, throwing 6 000 employees out of work. This is portrayed as ‘raw

capitalism’, China style. Is it any different from the Canadian manufacturing companies who, over the last five years, have run from Canada to greener (as in green money) pastures, throwing 300 000 workers out of a job.

On November 19th. the leaders of the US auto industry left Washington without any bail out money for their companies, but traveled in their private jets. Each flight cost about \$20 000. As one observer commented, “there is a delicious irony in seeing private luxury jets flying into Washington with tin cups in their hands saying they are going to be trimming down and streamlining their business.” Kinda like seeing someone show up at a soup kitchen in a top hat and tux. With GM and Chrysler close to collapse, some 2 to 3 million workers will become unemployed, probably none of whom will pick up their dole money (if they qualify) in a private jet. An article on disappearing auto jobs (Toronto Star, 14 Nov 2008) revealed that the average assembly worker in that industry produces \$300 000 worth of value per year and receives \$65 000 in pay. That means on an eight-hour shift starting at, say, 7:00am, the worker has earned his wages by 8:45am. Hope they all figure this out and come to our conclusion!

## Poverty

The Ontario Association of Food Banks (yes, in Canada) released a report showing poverty’s total costs to the Ontario economy amount to \$38 billion, “The simple truth is that the poor are a drag

on the economy, and by giving them crumbs instead of lifting them out of poverty, we ensure they will continue to live miserable, yet expensive lives.” Just how they are going to be lifted out of poverty is never stated. Once again, Captain McGuinty rides to the rescue of the poor. His Government has raised welfare rates, for example, a single person would receive \$572 per month, up from \$560. This increase brings them up to the recommended level, FOR 1988! As the average rental in Toronto is around \$1 000, you can see the difficulties. This is from a government committed to fighting poverty! Increasing numbers are lining up at food banks and debt-burdened post secondary students figure prominently. A report on poverty by the Ontario Association of Food Banks suggests the obvious – that poverty affects more than the homeless and for the ten thousandth time states that investing in childhood development, early education programs, literacy, job training etc would be a good investment. The plain fact is that governments have been trying to eradicate poverty for decades without success. Socialists know that capitalism itself is the problem and investment is needed to establish socialism to solve the problem.

Top US army officials said, “A \$160 billion future combat systems modernization program managed by Boeing Co. and SAIC Inc. was on budget and on track.” (Socialist Standard, Nov. 2008). Yet \$30 billion a year would eliminate world hunger. So much for capitalism’s priorities. A November 20th. article in the Toronto Star by Da-

vid Hulchanski, quotes, “It wasn’t too long ago that our language did not include terms like good jobs or bad jobs or the working poor. How could you work and be poor? Times have certainly changed. In the early 1970s about two-thirds of the city of Toronto’s neighbourhoods were middle income – within 20% of the average individual income. By 2006 that percentage had declined to just one third. The point is that in the 1970s most people thought that prosperity was here to stay, the fact being, within capitalism prosperity and security are all too fleeting.

On December 11th. Anderson Cooper, then a guest of Regis Philbin and Kelly Ripa, mentioned that one million sharks a year are killed. They are caught, their fins removed for sale, and, still alive, are thrown back into the ocean. Without their fins, the sharks lose the ability to balance, sink to the bottom, and die. This is causing havoc on the ecosystem and endangering the species, but who cares? Big profits justify such reprehensible actions.

Madonna recently settled her divorce with ex-husband, Guy Ritchie, by parting with 50 million pounds, CA\$93 million (Metro News, 16/Dec/2008). Ritchie also keeps the couple’s West London pub and their country home. The couple was reportedly worth US\$525 million, most of which belonged to Madonna. “I’d assume it’s one of the largest payouts ever in a divorce settlement,” lawyer Rosenberg commented. Contrast that with the recent movie, “Slumdog Millionaire” which is set in the slums of Mumbai. In fact to use the word ‘slums’ is a masterpiece of understatement. One sees the squalor of homes made of cardboard and corrugated iron, of communal toilets that are simple pits, and the sheer hopelessness on the people’s faces. The film portrays unscrupulous men capturing children and maiming them to qualify as beggars, and, in one case, even blinding a young boy. All this in the main industrial city of a country that is becoming one of the world’s leading industrial powers. Do not these vast differences in wealth suggest that something is very wrong in capitalist society? In a socialist society, no one will live in slums anywhere as money will not be needed and no one will be able to accumulate vast fortunes that are used to further enslave the working class.

## Declaration of Principles

### Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of society as a whole.

### Declaration of Principles

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into an agent of emancipation and the overthrow of plutocratic privilege.

7. That as political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interest of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. The Socialist Party of Canada, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to support these principles to the end that a termination may be brought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.



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